



BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Will Beckett, BPA President

The Summer is coming to a close and school has begun. Neighborhood activity is picking up with a proposal for a variance for a private school on property zoned multi-family near Briones park. The expanded FREE bus service has begun, servicing Gunn and JIStanford and extending cross-town service to a full day.

Not to say there wasn't activity over the Summer. Mary Jane Leon has been working with the Seniors committee with many meetings and lots of activity to pull together seniors with common interests and concerns.

Maryanne Welton (ZALU chair) has been finishing up her home replacement project, as well as meeting with people involved with the school proposal mentioned above (see ZALU article, page 3). She has been very active preparing for the start of school at Barron Park Elementary.

Board News

Don Anderson, will be working with activities at Gunn and Briones and focusing on traffic issues related to Gunn and the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Safety Committee is being reformed after a two year break. Ed Gaines (493-5408) has agreed to pull together a group that will begin working on safety issues in the neighborhood beginning with the current emergency water concerns related to the Hetch Hetchy water supply. They will begin regular meetings and are looking to expand the committee with anyone with similar interests around disaster preparedness and community safety.

Al Fresco

Occupying the old Fresco, then Willow Street Cafe location, Al Fresco is here! Locally owned and operated by Charles Alley and his partner and Exec. Chef, Romeo Sembrano, it offers a wide selection of new dishes, and some of the favorites Fresco served (red pepper soup, for instance). Alley recently moved to Barron Park from the Midtown area because he wanted to be close to his business and for his kids to be close to Gunn where they attend school. He does a lot of good things for the community, including donations to West Bay Opera and the Electric Auto Association. It is important to point out that all restaurants in the Bay Area are going through a very difficult time due to the slowdown of the economy. Al Fresco (see ad on the back page) and Senor Taco will attend the Electric Car Rally at Stanford that I coordinate every September and hopefully that will help boost their business. Please remember to frequent all our local businesses so they can weather these difficult times.

Barron Park Elementary School Garden Plans

With the completion of construction at Barron Park Elementary School scheduled for the end of the year, the community is encouraged to take part in creating plans for a new garden and gathering spot at the school's entry. Once the temporary portable classrooms are removed, the front area under the redwood trees will be redesigned to create a welcoming invita-

tion to the school grounds. Community members are invited to help develop plans by attending a neighborhood meeting on Sunday, October 28, from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the school's multipurpose room. Refreshments will be provided. Questions? Call principal Cathy Howard at 858-0508. (Just a reminder that Oct. 28 is the first day of daylight savings time.)

Street Safety

Finally, let me do my annual reminder about traffic safety. Please be aware that we all need to share the streets with cars, bikes, and pedestrians alike. Obey traffic laws and most of all, be aware of activities on the street and keep them safe and comfortable for all of us. Think of others around you and default to less risky behavior (the first rains will be coming soon). —Please see excellent article by Carolyn Spitz on pg. 6.



SEE THE DONKEYS

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

Bring your kids and dogs!

D O N K E Y N E W S

By Susan Carsen — Donkey Volunteer

On Saturday, July 14, more than a dozen volunteer donkey-handlers and their families learned that Niner and Perry are equus assinus – donkeys – rather than equus caballus which is the Latin for horses. They learned that Niner and Perry are “jacks” which is what male donkeys are called. Females are jennets. During a relaxed seminar for the handlers in the donkey pasture, veterinarian Dr. Gary Hanes of Briarwood Equine Clinic in Woodside demonstrated some aspects of regular equine health care as he gave the donkeys their yearly vaccinations – donkeys require the same kind of health care as horses. First, though, he provided information both interesting and charming about these special Barron Park residents.

In addition to learning the difference between a jack and a jennet, the group learned that a mule is a cross between a jack and a female horse. A cross between a jennet and a horse stallion is called a hinny. For all practical purposes, mules are sterile and so cannot reproduce themselves.

A “burro” is the term for a mid-sized wild donkey.

With good care, donkeys can live between 25 and 40 years.

Donkeys with the dorsal strip down the back and over the shoulders, as both Niner and Perry have, are often referred to as “Jerusalem” donkeys.

Donkeys are herd animals and form close attachments. A lone donkey is most likely to be a very lonely donkey. Dr. Hanes’ own donkey has a goat as it’s constant companion.

Donkey’s hooves are shaped differently than those of horses and generally they do not need shoes. However they do need regular hoof care and should have their hooves trimmed at least 4 times a year. Farrier Clyde Farmer, a Barron Park native, also joined the group that morning, allowing the handlers to see how the hooves are trimmed and learn what problems to be on the lookout for in regards to the donkey’s feet.

Dr. Hanes showed how to tell that both Perry and Niner are in need of a little diet,



Dr. Gary Hanes with Niner demonstrating to the Donkey Handlers.

and demonstrated the measured amount of hay they should be getting at meal times. The “boys” are currently getting a lower calorie feed, and as always the many visitors to the donkey pasture are asked to not give them any treats – no matter how loudly they may bray for a hand-out.

The handlers enjoyed a picnic in Bol Park following the seminar. Participants heard again – or for the first time for newcomers – the chronicle of Bol Park, the donkey pasture, and the various donkeys who came before Perry and Niner as recounted by long-time residents Edith and Leland Smith. Conversation turned briefly to financial concerns regarding future care of Perry and Niner, and any donkeys who may come to Barron Park in the future.

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.

Contributions are generated from an annual appeal in the Barron Park newsletter, sale of the donkey t-shirts at the Bol Park May Fete, and cash put in the Donkeys’ Jar on their regular Sunday morning outings in Bol Park. Donkey handlers are grateful for the support of the donkeys’ friends who made contributions over the past year totaling almost \$2,000. If no unexpected expenses arise, this will allow a few hundred dollars to be added to assets saved in the Donkey Project Fund for emergencies; however, a sudden illness or other emergency arising with one of the donkeys could quickly drain down this sum. There is no guarantee that donations will continue to flow into the account to ensure sufficient funds in the future.

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. For this reason, it is imperative that more assets be added to the donkeys’ fund than are being spent for their general care on an annual basis. The handlers hope that those generous neighbors who have contributed in the past will

consider increasing their support this year, and that those who have not yet made a contribution to the donkeys will consider doing so now. At least one Barron Park resident has indicated that the donkeys will be included in her will, an opportunity that others may wish to consider as well.

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

For further information about making a contribution on behalf of the donkeys, please call Edith Smith at 493-9386. If you would like information about how to become one of the volunteer donkey handlers, please call Don Anderson at 494-8672.

And don't forget to say "hi" to Perry and Niner when you pass by their pasture. Please remember though - Dr. Hanes insists they're on a diet!

BPA On-Line!

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ZONING & LAND USE

By Maryanne Welton, committee chair

The project showing the most action in Barron Park is the new school proposed by the Children's International School on Clemo Street. They have begun the process for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to build a new school on the 1.7-acre orchard across the street from Briones Park. This private, non-profit school for grades kindergarten through 8th grade, currently located at Cubberley, would have a maximum of 135 to 150 students.

The lot is currently zoned RM-30, which allows multi-family housing. If the school is unsuccessful in obtaining the CUP, a residential developer will most likely build a large housing project on the property. It has previously been suggested as a possible location for a public library or community center, but it is unlikely the City could afford the price either the school or developer could pay for the site. Housing advocates are reluctant to see multifamily housing sites used for other purposes.

The BPA sponsored a neighborhood meeting on September 6 to present the architect's conceptual plans for the project and get community input. About 20 neighbors attended, as well as representatives from the City Planning Department. The major concerns they voiced were the impact of additional traffic on the existing congestion and access for the fire department, neighbors, and school families. Neighbors from the Green Acres I and II subdivisions were surprised they hadn't heard about the project before and want to be involved as the project goes through the City's approval process. Preserving the site for multifamily housing, possibly affordable housing, was also mentioned. At a previous neighborhood meeting on May 8, people were also concerned about parking, size and height of the buildings, and use of the park by the school.

The school and their architects will prepare plans that address traffic, noise, and com-

patibility with adjacent residential uses. They have begun work with a traffic engineer and arborist. Their reports will become part of the application for the Conditional Use Permit, which the school intends to submit in October. Various City departments will evaluate the project and hold a public hearing so all interested parties can respond to the proposal. Watch the BPA news email list for further information about public meetings concerning this project.

The status of most of the projects mentioned in the most recent newsletter has not changed much:

South El Camino Real Design Study: The planning study looking at transportation, urban design, land use and economic factors that affect development along El Camino is underway. A draft of new design guidelines that help create a pedestrian-oriented, neighborhood-serving retail district will be available soon. These guidelines will impact the look and feel of all new and renovated structures along El Camino as well as the public areas, sidewalks and plantings.

Old Blockbuster Site: A nine-unit condominium project is proposed for the site of the old Blockbuster Video store on the corner of El Camino and Vista. Preliminary review by the Planning Department and Architectural Review Board recommended design changes to encourage a more pedestrian-friendly street frontage. Revised plans have not yet been submitted.

Subdivision at 797 Matadero: City Planning staff informed the property owners that their plans to subdivide a large parcel on Matadero into five single family house lots would not likely be approved. Revised plans have not been submitted.

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

BARRON PARK HISTORY

by Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

Barron Park Pioneers

(PART ONE OF A SIX-PART ARTICLE)

Jose Pena: Our First Landowner**Before Any Landowners—
The Puichon**

At the time of the first Spanish exploration of the San Francisco Bay Area in 1769, the land we now call Barron Park was occupied by people we call Puichon, The Puichon were a tribelet included in the group of Native Americans known to the Spanish as the Ohlone. There was a village or campsite on the Southeast bank of Matadero Creek in the upper part of the present-day donkey pasture and probably extending upstream under the Veteran's Administration Hospital property.

The quiet isolation of the Puichon was first disturbed by the exploring expedition of Gaspar de Portola, who "discovered" San Francisco Bay. Portola's men camped near a giant redwood tree on the banks of San Francisquito Creek from November 6 to 11, 1769. They ranged throughout the Santa Clara Valley, certainly riding through what is now South Palo Alto. Were the Puichon then living at the site in Barron Park? If so, were they visited by Portola's men? We can only speculate, as there is no record of a visit to any "rancheria", as they called the Native American settlements, in our area.

The Appearance of Our Land

We do know a little bit about the appearance of the land in 1769. Roble Ridge was lightly wooded with well-spaced Valley Oaks and a few Live Oaks, as was most of Gunn High School and the Alta Mesa Cemetery grounds. Another oak woodland extended from the vicinity of Matadero and Whitsell Streets east through the Magnolia Drive and Military Way neighborhoods to Los Robles Avenue. The courses of both Barron and Matadero Creeks were densely lined with Valley Oak and Coast Live Oak, along with occasional Buckeye, California Laurel and Poison Oak. Both creeks flowed approximately where they do today, but were probably not cut so deeply. There were probably seasonal marshes west and south of the slightly higher ground along present-day El



This view of the Stanford Lands in the 1930s gives a good feel for what our landscape probably looked like during the Mexican era. The view is of Coyote Hill in the distance and the VA Hospital property in the foreground.

Camino Real. The area around Chimalus Avenue may have been covered with a light growth of Chamise or Chaparral ("Chimiles"). Most of the rest of the area, from El Centro Avenue east to Encina Grande, Maybell and Greenacres I and II, was covered with grassland interspersed with clumps of oaks.

Santa Clara Mission

In the decade following the Portola expedition, Spanish explorations of the area became frequent, culminating in the founding of Santa Clara Mission on January 12, 1777. This marked the beginning of the end of the Puichon way of life and the start of the mission period. Within a few years of the mission's founding, the Native Americans of the Santa Clara Valley had been gathered in to the mission community and converted from hunter-gatherers to European-type agricultural workers. The population dropped precipitously as European diseases and cultural demoralization took their toll. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, the missions had become industrial-style cattle rancho businesses producing hides and tallow for semi-legal trading with "Boston" ships. Our land was incorporated into Mission Santa Clara's grazing area, and may have been designated partly for shepherding. The Barron Park area acquired its first

road, Arastradero, which was a logging haul road from the redwood groves of Portola Valley and Woodside to Mission Santa Clara and the Pueblo of San Jose.

The few Spanish settlers in California took advantage of Mexican independence from Spain in 1821 to lobby Mexico City for secularization of the missions. During secularization in the 1830s, the mission businesses were ended and the Native Americans freed from clerical control and granted small plots of of the mission farm land to support themselves. After a series of abortive "revolutions" against arbitrary rule by governors sent from Mexico City, the Californios—Mexican citizens, some of whom had married Native Americans—won a greater degree of control over the province and the governors began making large land grants to their political supporters. The Californios were granted large swaths of the mission grazing lands to start ranchos.

Don Jose Pena

It was at this time that Don Jose Pena appears in our history. Pena was an artilleryman at the Presidio of San Francisco who retired from active military service and moved to Santa Clara. Phyllis Filiberti Butler, author of "Old Santa Clara Valley" describes him as "one of the most ambitious, intelligent men of California's Mexi-

can period. Fully aware of the value of land, he petitioned for seven land grants. Though he took possession of only two of these, he left his unique mark up and down Alta California. As lieutenant of artillery, elector, teacher, commissary and acting administrator, he served at San Diego, Monterey, San Francisco, and his last years at Santa Clara”.

In 1840, Governor Alvarado granted him an eight room adobe house at Mission Santa Clara with 100 varas of surrounding land. He was a teacher of Santa Clara’s “Book School”—forerunner of Santa Clara University. After secularization he kept the account books and was in charge of the storehouses. His house still stands, preserved as “The Pena Adobe” at 3260 The Alameda in Santa Clara.

Rancho Santa Rita

Earlier, in 1822, Pena had petitioned Mission Santa Clara for permission to occupy two square leagues or about 4,400 acres of the mission grazing lands in South Palo Alto. His request was granted, but nothing is known of Pena’s use of the land for the next 20 years.

After secularization and the Californios takeover of the provincial government, Pena moved to obtain title to the mission land. In 1841, he applied for the land he had been using and was granted 8,500 acres by Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado. Pena was then 64 years old and was teaching school in the small community at Santa Clara. He named his property Rancho Rincon de San Francisquito (“The ranch in the bend of the Little Saint Francis”), but it was generally known as Rancho Santa Rita. It had at least three structures on it. There was a wood house on the south side of Lagunita Drive on the Stanford campus. It also had a herdsman’s hut located near the San Antonio Road overpass at Alma. This is the same general location where Secundino Robles later built his renowned two-story adobe ranch house. The third structure was the “Corral de Lleguas” (mares) north of San Antonio or Lleguas Creek (now Adobe Creek), possibly in the vicinity of Middlefield Road. Pena enjoyed ownership of the rancho for only six years before selling it in 1847 to Don Secundino Robles and his brother Teodoro for \$3,500, or about 40 cents an acre. He died in 1852.

The story of the Robles family will be told in the next article of this six-part series on the early landowners of Barron Park, to appear in the Winter issue of this newsletter.

20TH BIRTHDAY FOR ERIC’S TRAINS

By Linda Lui

Barron Park Garden Railway just celebrated twenty years of operation on August 28, 2001. The G-gauge model fills the backyard of Operator Eric Struck’s home at 748 Kendall Avenue and includes nine locomotives and over a hundred freight and passenger cars, all tucked away beneath a tarp protecting the setup from leaves from the canopy of large trees overhead. The backyard railway opened in 1981 with one locomotive and three cars and was later featured on Bay Area Backroads. Eric is a member of the Bay Area Garden Railway Society, whose annual meeting in March and board meetings every other month keep him in touch with other model train enthusiasts.

The Railway is open Saturdays from 12-4:30pm, Sundays 11-5pm (except the third Sunday of the month), and some holidays. It closes late November through April. Eric welcomes appointments for school groups. There is no charge but donations are appreciated. Call (650)493-7367 for more information.



BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Emergency Preparedness: Vacant

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Neighborhood Safety:

Art Bayce & Gwen Luce

Newsletter: Nancy Hamilton

Parks: Doug Graham

School Liaison: Will Beckett, acting

Seniors: Mary Jane Leon

Traffic & Streets: Will Beckett

Zoning & Land Use: Maryanne Welton

BPA meetings are held the 3rd

Tuesday every other month at 7:15 p.m.

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

TRAFFIC SAFETY

by Carolyn Spitz

Is Going to School Just a “Walk in the Park?”

Fall is in the air and school is back in session. Streets are filled with students of all ages on foot or on bikes, scooters, and skateboards. The kids are getting great exercise and helping keep the air clean but their safety on the way to and from school is not something we can take for granted. This is an excellent time to look at what we each can do to help make Barron Park safer for our young residents.

A quick tour of Barron Park can show many hazards to those moving on their own power. Here are a few:

- Overgrown bushes and tree branches jutting into streets.
- Cars parked several feet onto street pavement.
- Recycling containers in or near street.
- Blind curves with overgrowth.
- Construction dumpsters and materials in parking strips or on street.

These obstacles can make those on the road less visible or require them to move dangerously into traffic. Driving practices such as speeding or unsafe passing are also a major problem. Below are some tips for drivers, property owners, parents, pedestrians and cyclists. How can you help?

Tips for Drivers

- Observe the 25 mph speed limit in school zones.
- Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists in crosswalks.
- Be aware. Young children cannot accurately judge speed and distance.
- Don't park in bike lanes.
- Avoid making “U” turns, backing up or other unsafe maneuvers near schools.
- Avoid school areas during school start and end hours (8-8:30 and 2:30-3:00)
- Always carefully check behind you before backing out of driveways. Be extra cautious around stopped school and city buses.
- Children are unpredictable. They may do

strange actions just as you pass them. Give them lots of room and slow down. This is especially true of bicyclists. They may suddenly swerve to avoid a bump, or just for the fun of it.

- Fall comes with many new cyclists who are unfamiliar with the road or carrying a backpack for the first time. Give them room to make a mistake and live.
- Be extra careful at intersections. Children sometimes may not stop, may not understand the right of way, or may be distracted.

Tips for Property Owners

Take a look around your own property to see how safely pedestrians can pass. If a child must avoid obstacles by stepping into the street, then they are being put at risk. Overgrown landscaping can make it hard for drivers to see children on their way to school and vice versa.

- Trim overgrown bushes and trees.
- Park cars in driveways or well inside parking strips.
- Keep all obstacles off street and ask the same of your guests (cars, recycling bins).
- Provide sight lines around construction site obstacles. Construction vehicles and pedestrians/cyclists need to be able to see each other. Ask construction workers and regular service vehicles to park safely near your home.

Tips for Parents

- Help your children choose a safe route to school.
- Teach children to be predictable, to always cross at corners and to obey stop signs and crossing guards. Walk or bike with them until you are confident they can handle the route safely.
- If you must drive, consider carpooling. Fewer cars mean fewer risks for accidents.
- Always follow the school's posted traffic flows when dropping kids off or picking them up from school.

Tips for Pedestrians

- Be alert. Everything is bigger and moving faster than you!

- Be extra cautious around obstacles, shady areas or curves in the roadway. You may not be visible to drivers.

- Make eye contact with drivers at intersections and driveways. Don't assume they see you!

- Wear bright outerwear, especially on overcast days or early mornings to get higher visibility. Consider applying reflector strips to backpacks.

Tips for Bicyclists

- Wear a helmet and make sure it fits properly: snug and level on your head, covering most of your forehead.
- Ride on the right—cyclists riding wrong way are hard for drivers to see.
- Be alert. Watch out for cars opening doors, backing out of driveways and making turns.
- Stay visible to traffic. Make eye contact with drivers.
- Obey stop signs, traffic lights and other laws.
- Walk bikes in crosswalks.
- Stay off sidewalks or safely share walk-ride areas with pedestrians where sidewalks are not present.
- Do not carry things in hands. Use backpack or basket.
- Avoid riding in valley gutters since these often have debris that can damage tires or cause skids.

Tips for Skateboarders, In-Line Skates, and Scooters

- Wear a helmet! See tips for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Be extra cautious around obstacles, shady areas or curves in the roadway. You may not be visible to drivers.
- Make eye contact with drivers at intersections and driveways. Don't assume they see you!
- Note: skates and scooters should follow pedestrian rules. When sidewalks are present, skaters and scooters should not be in the roadway.

These practices will make it easier for our neighborhood students get to school. Following these suggestions also makes it safer and more pleasant when any of us decide to get out of the car. Let's all share our streets safely!

SENIOR UPDATE

By Mary Jane Leon

Lunches Are a Hit

As planned, the Barron Park Seniors got together for lunch June 11. Twenty-six of us crowded together in Hobee's little back room, and had a rousing time. Food was good, service a little slow but Fabian did his best. Volume was so high we all had to yell to carry on conversations. We didn't let that stop us at all—just went ahead and yelled.

Our August get together was a picnic at Juana Briones Park on the 16th. We met near the picnic tables under the redwood trees. Everyone brought a sandwich, and the Barron Park Association provided desert. The weather was perfect, the turnout was good, and everyone seemed to enjoy being outside on such a lovely day. No yelling necessary, since we had room to spread out.

The next social outing will be another lunch, probably in early October. If you would like to join us, phone Julie or Mary Jane (phone numbers at the end of this column), so we can let you know time, date, and location. We would also like to hear your suggestions for restaurants. By October we can't expect the weather to be good enough for another picnic.

Services for Seniors

The Seniors Committee of the Barron Park Association continues to offer services for seniors. If you would like to find out more, let us hear from you. We could

- Run an errand for you or with you.
- Do small odd jobs at your home.
- Help you learn to use e-mail.
- Stop by for a visit, or give you a daily phone call.

How to Build Community

Turn off your TV * Leave your house * Sit on your stoop * Ask a question * Pick up litter * Ask for help when you need it * Turn down the music * Start a tradition

All this advice comes from a lovely poster headlined "How to Build Community." If you want to read the whole poster, come to the next Seniors lunch. We will bring it along.

Community works at many levels: our block, our neighborhood—Barron Park, our city— Palo Alto.

We know there are many seniors out there who have energy to spare and time on their hands. If you are one of the active ones, consider giving some of yourself to the Partners in Caring program, either in Barron Park or in the larger community of Palo Alto.

Partners in Caring

Partners in Caring, sponsored by Avenidas, matches active partners with older adults who need a bit of assistance in daily living. Volunteers are needed now. Each volunteer in this program phones or visits their partner regularly and helps with some of the daily activities that can become difficult as we age. They may provide shopping assistance, transportation, friendly visiting, meal preparation, or respite to weary families caring for a loved one. Volunteers usually form a long-term, one-on-one relationship with their partner.

A very small time commitment can make a world of difference to an oldster in your

community. If you are interested in this program, phone Candace Mindigo at 723-5101, or phone one of us, to get signed up for a one-day training session before you are assigned to your partner.

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

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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