

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Will Beckett, BPA President

The rains seem to have let up a bit and now the sun is out and there are definite signs of Spring though it seems too early. We are planning our annual May Fete (May 6th, Sunday) with some additions this year that are sure to please. The El Camino Real has been changing but not in the areas we expected over the last year. It looks like there will be a new middle school opening closer to our neighborhood and soon our under-15 kids will not have to cross El Camino, the railroad tracks and Alma to get to school by biking or walking. In January we had one

of the most attended recent meetings ever (125), when City Manager Frank Benest presented (with his staff) a picture into City finances and focused on four issues facing Barron Park. It was clear that having this on Sunday afternoon worked much better than any of us had thought it would. We hope to make this an annual meeting and invite Frank back again. [Please see detailed report on page 10].

This issue contains a survey that has now become a permanent part of our Spring issue which goes to all residents in Barron Park (not just members). As many of you know, the BPA depends on this information to help guide us on issues facing our community. We know that traffic continues to be a very high priority issue, but we also know that people in the neighborhood

have additional interests regarding our quality of life in Barron Park and we need to hear from you. Please take the time to fill it out and send it in so we know what is on your mind.

Many of you have called with concerns about code violations and issues about development through the last year. I really like getting these calls and enjoy sharing stories about the neighborhood. It is very nice to know how many people care deeply about Barron Park and recognize what a special place it is. It is a great place but requires a lot of volunteer help to keep it that way. People continue to step forward and help but we can always use more. Please feel free to contact one of us if you have an interest in contributing. Another way to contribute is by being a member of the association. If you have been a member, please use the form attached to renew, if you have not been a member please use this form to become one. Thanks for your continued support.

COMMUNITY EVENT

(Sponsored by the BPA)



May Fete in Bol Park

May 6th, 12:00 to 4:00

May Pole dance about 2:00

Gary Breitbard providing music

Food for sale at Senior Taco booth

Drinks for sale at BPA booth

Some artists will be showing their work

(Artist's info. on page 11)

ZONING & LAND USE

by Maryanne Welton, committee chair

The biggest news about development along El Camino through our neighborhood is the start of a study by the City of Palo Alto's Planning Department. The City's Comprehensive Plan calls for a multi-disciplinary planning study to look at transportation, urban design, land use and economic factors that affect development along El Camino. The study was scheduled to begin in 8 years. In response to increased interest by property owners in redeveloping or renovating their properties and efforts on the part of neighborhood

groups, the timeline has been moved up. The City has already allocated \$15,000 to begin the study. Grants from Caltrans and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) are expected to fund over \$300,000 to hire a consultant team and begin work early next year. Caltrans is interested in developing prototypical alternative design standards on state highways that run through urban areas, such as El Camino. Their typical standards are highly restrictive and make it difficult to create pedestrian [CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]

[ZALU CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

an-oriented streetscapes, with wider sidewalks or plantings. This study would look at the entire length of El Camino through Palo Alto and propose alternative standards to allow improvements in the public right-of-way that enhance the streetscape. In addition, the City has applied for a grant from MTC to look at urban design and land use issues along El Camino. The goal would be to craft a set of new design guidelines that would impact the look and feel of all new and renovated structures along El Camino.

These studies will involve extensive community participation. A steering committee is being formed with representation from various neighborhoods, including Barron Park, Ventura, Greenacres, and Charleston Meadows. Representatives from Barron Park include myself and Lynn Melena, a planner working for the City of Mountain View. Community workshops will also be conducted to allow any interested residents and property and business owners to take part in shaping these standards and guidelines. Watch for announcements of future meetings and let your voice be heard. Or let me know you're interested and I'll make sure you get notices about the meetings. This project has the potential to transform El Camino into a neighborhood-serving, pedestrian district—let's work together to make it happen.

Other ZALU news in the neighborhood

4131 El Camino: This three-story, mixed-use project including ground floor retail, office, and residential units is in the process of obtaining final approvals from the City Council and Planning Commission. Construction would start next year.

The Goodwill Trailer Site

After meeting with City Planning Staff and ZALU committee members, the property owner realized that his proposed hotel project was not well-received by the community and withdrew his plans. No word on future plans at this date.

Future of Single Family Homes

Mark Kriss from the BPA board has been an active participant in this city-wide committee to look at preparing guidelines and

a review process for renovation and new construction of single family homes. They will soon be making recommendations for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Subdivision at 797 Matadero

Plans are proposed to subdivide a large parcel on Matadero into five single family house lots. The developer held a public meeting and about 40 neighbors attended to review the plans and voice their concerns about the number of homes, off-

street parking, privacy from second story rooms, and other design issues. We have met with the neighbors and discussions with City staff and the developer have been taking place to address their concerns. The application to the City for a subdivision map is not yet complete and formal City review will take place during the next several months.

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

GROUNDWATER CLEANUP PROGRESS

A Barron Park Success Story

Public Meeting, Thursday April 26, 2001 Barron Park Elementary School 800 Barron Ave.

[Editor's note: your attendance is encouraged, to review an update of the project, and to show that we are very interested in the updates to be presented]

Careless disposal of chemical waste at nine sites in the Stanford Research Park in the 1970's and early 1980's led to the pollution of Matadero Creek (in 1983 it ran blue) and several aquifers (underground water bearing zones) in much of the Barron Park neighborhood.

When this became public knowledge, in early 1986, city and county officials held neighborhood meetings attempting to reassure residents that "All is well, leave it to us!" The residents, however, felt compelled to become pro-active. The, then, BPA president appointed three professionals who were also residents, to negotiate pro bono for the neighborhood with the state and the responsible parties, and their consultants for the cleanup of the creek and the aquifers under Barron Park. This decision was not universally popular since some members of the neighborhood were concerned about possible repercussions such as that children might become sick, housing values might drop, and Matadero creek

might turn into a sewer. Some residents proposed a court battle hoping for large cash settlements.

What did happen was that no one became sick due to the creek and groundwater pollution and housing values have increasingly gone up.

The success story is that Matadero Creek has been cleaned up and nowadays the revitalized creek has plenty of fish and other goodies for our lovely egrets and ducks. The groundwater cleanup has progressed over the fifteen years, through problem delineation to actual completed clean-up of increasing areas of Barron Park.

It is hoped that within three to eight years most, if not all of the aquifers in all of Barron Park will have been cleaned up to drinking water standards!

To hear more about this neighborhood success story, please come to the public hearing meeting, Thursday, April 26, 2001, at 7:30-9:00pm. This will be held at the Barron Park Elementary School located at 800 Barron Avenue. See you there!

[Editor's note: in future newsletters, we will explain in depth the history of the clean-up, and ongoing solutions.]

D O N K E Y N E W S

by Edith Smith — Donkey Volunteer

Perry and Niner are enjoying the rich grass of their green pasture after many rains. They've enjoyed their visits with Barron Park neighbors, especially on their Sunday strolls through Bol Park, 9:30 to 10:30 every Sunday (except stormy days). They've had visitors from Laguna Beach, from Seattle, from Japan and from England in recent weeks. They participated in the first annual Holiday Parade, Dec. 23, organized by Don Anderson. Perry and Niner joined over 100 people and the Gunn High School Choir, directed by Bill Liberatore, in a musical walk through Barron Park to Juana Briones School. I believe the donkeys sang too. On Feb. 28 the donkeys and handlers Jim Bronson, Inge Harding-Barlow, Leland Smith and myself met Barron Park School Kindergarten Class, Room 1, and teachers Kathy Clarke and Joan Barksdale in Bol Park for petting, currying, singing and storytelling about donkeys in many world cultures. The children learned donkey terms in both French and Spanish.

Perry posed for artists and video camera operators from PDI/DREAMWORKS as a donkey model for a new animated film, *SHRECK*, to be released in May, 2001. More news on Perry's movie will be

forthcoming soon.

New Perry and Niner T-Shirts in sizes kids small to adults large will be on sale at the Barron Park May Fete, May 6. As always, ALL PROFITS from the T-Shirt sales will go to support the donkeys (their fodder, equipment, farrier and vet.) While helping the donkeys you can have colorful portraits of both donkeys as wearable souvenirs.

This season the donkey committee could use one or two more volunteers. The donkeys are fed and checked twice a day,

morning and evening. We only ask for one feeding (either time) per week from our volunteers. If you walk the bike path daily (or bicycle or SCOOT nowadays), and would like to spend five minutes feeding and petting our special Barron Park animals, just give Don Anderson a ring at 494-8672.

Now there is an added attraction for strollers visiting the donkeys. From the observation point just to the northwest of the bridge, swarms of small fish may be seen in Matadero Creek. They voraciously gobble up bread crumbs tossed down to them. And this spring, for the first time in recent memory, some good-sized (7 to 10 inches) trout have been spotted. The best time for fish watching is around the noon hour—when the sun is right overhead.



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

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

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

BARRON PARK HISTORY

by Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

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

(PART FOUR OF A FIVE-PART ARTICLE)

A Three Decade Saga

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

New Stirrings in 1971

After the straw poll in 1968, hardly anyone in Barron Park cared to even think about annexation for the next several years. The BPA was deeply engaged in planning,

organizing and promoting the idea of Bol Park, phase I of which was constructed and landscaped in 1973. Wisely, the organization backed away from the annexation issue and decided to wait until some more of the "diehards" moved away or died off.

The first stirrings of what was to become the eighth and last-ever annexation movement were felt in October, 1971 when an annexation bid was made to Palo Alto by residents of Stanford's new Frenchman Hill area. George Sipel, the acting City Manager called for an over-all annexation policy covering not only Stanford lands, but also Barron Park, Monroe Park, the Los Trancos area, and the ITT property (in the Baylands). He noted that Barron Park was totally surrounded by the city. The Times editorialized that "It was Barron Park's explosive reactions to past efforts at annexation over the years that was chiefly responsible for the city adopting a passive attitude toward annexations—no annexation unless residents asked for it and then only for sufficiently large areas."

The County Pushes for Annexation

In 1972, the BPA began talks with the County over updating the General Plan for Barron Park that the supervisors had adopted back in 1966. The county made clear to the BPA that annexation soon was the only sensible course of action for Barron Park. City staff indicated that the emphasis on street standards of past city

officials had changed to an awareness of neighborhood environments. School officials expressed concern about fire protection for the two schools in the area, since the city still had no mutual aid agreement for fire protection with Barron Park.

On May 23, 1973, the *Mercury* reported that the Palo Alto City Council had unanimously ordered the city manager to investigate steps needed for annexation, the political issues involved, and the preparation of data to deal with those issues. One factor favoring annexation was the residents' felt needs for greater protection against the growing trend toward apartment developments in Barron Park. By September, the Barron Park annexation movement was gathering some steam.

On October 3, 1973, a public meeting sponsored by the Board of Directors of the Barron Park Association was held at Barron Park School to discuss annexation. The BPA board at that time was composed of Richard Placone, Chimalus Avenue; Robert England, Paradise Way; Emma Lou Miller, La Donna Avenue; Flora Nixon, Vista Avenue; Sam Elster, Laguna Oaks Place; Jack Buktenica, Park Blvd; and Ken Arutunian, Matadero Avenue. More than 250 people attended the public meeting. City Manager George Sipel and members of his staff made a presentation on annexation, distributed basic information, answered questions and explained the city's position. A nine-page handout was distributed at the meeting. The proposed annexation would cover 351 acres, including 1,378 housing units and a population of 3,789 (1970 census figures).

Annexation issues were listed as municipal services; cost impact on residents; cost impact on city; street improvements; community planning and zoning; traffic circulation; community identity; and ordinance enforcement. The difference in taxes was only 9 cents per hundred dollars



assessed valuation, or a reduction of about \$6.75 annually for the average house. Utility savings were calculated at about 21% or \$102 per year for the average home user. Although positive, these weren't very exciting findings even in terms of 1973 dollars.

Procedures leading to annexation were spelled out. A ten-step sequence was to begin with initial meetings between staff and annexation proponents—which had already been accomplished. Next would come consent of the city council to proceed towards annexation, then approval by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). After that would be a notice of intent to circulate a petition, followed by the actual circulation by proponents and filing of the petition with the city clerk. Notice of council intention to call a special election would be followed by protest hearings, the election itself, and, assuming passage, certification to the state.

The City Conducts a Survey

Immediately after the public meeting, a city-organized public opinion survey was conducted in Barron Park. Between October 11 and 16. About one-quarter (304 of 1,378) of Barron Park households were surveyed. The results were doubtless a little disappointing to annexation advocates. Thirty-five percent of the households surveyed were in favor of annexation, forty-two percent opposed, and a pivotal twenty-two percent had not yet made up their minds. When asked to actually mark a mock "ballot," the percentages became 40:49:11. Female respondents voted for annexation, but males were heavily against it. Fourteen percent did not know that Barron Park was an unincorporated part of Santa Clara County—although this dropped to seven percent among those who had lived in Barron Park six years or more. The most frequently cited advantages of annexation were better police and fire protection and use of the library system. Disadvantages were increased taxes, loss of the "country feeling" and dislike for sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. Reasons for Palo Alto wanting to annex were cited as; to increase the tax base, because of the logi-

cal location of Barron Park within Palo Alto (i.e., surrounded), and to exercise control over traffic flow, zoning, appearance of the area, and community services. Reasons why the County was in favor of annexation were listed as; not having to provide community services, area was too far from County headquarters, and cost savings.

The City Staff's report to Council on December 20 included the survey results referred to above, the demographic summary, and analyses of the cost impact on the city and on the residents of Barron Park. The demographic summary stated that "Barron Park is probably as similar to Palo Alto as any one single family residential neighborhood already in the City might be. Differences were fewer blacks and elderly, slightly lower educational level and average income, higher percentage of owner-occupied homes, of single-family homes, and proportion of long-term residents." The cost analysis concluded that annexation would be a break-even situation for the City, and residents would stay even on taxes but save about \$100 per year on utilities. The Staff recommendation to the Council was to;

- (1) Adopt a policy favoring the annexation of Barron Park to the City in its entirety and encourage Barron Park residents to initiate annexation proceedings.
- (2) Adopt a policy favoring the annexation of separate Barron Park parcels where stage of development and/or geographical location indicates the annexation would be logical from the standpoint of planning, zoning, or the provision of municipal services.
- (3) Direct the staff to continue to be responsive to the residents of Barron Park on matters of potential annexation.

The second recommendation constituted a warning to the BPA that, if Barron Park

continued to resist annexation, the City would work with the landowners of the El Camino commercial strip to annex their properties, thus starting a new round of piecemeal annexations.

A Group Investigates Incorporation

Several residents, unsatisfied with the BPA's conclusion in 1968 that incorporation was financially infeasible, decided to form a group and look into it themselves. The group was organized by Junya Peterson of Campana Drive at the beginning of 1974. About 60 residents met at Peterson's home on January 9. Roughly half of them expressed a preference for incorporation or interest in investigating the possibility.

The City Council Takes the Pledge

This meeting was followed on January 21 by a pledge from the city council that the city "would not rush in to force sidewalks and curbs on the narrow, tree-lined streets there (in Barron Park)." According to the *Times*, eight members voted in favor of annexation, and then they voted 7-1 in support of "no curbs and sidewalks." Councilman Byron Sher abstained, objecting that the "initiative for annexation should come from Barron Park." The city, he said, "should not embark on imperialistic or colonial ventures." In rebuttal, Councilman John Berwald said the council should "give our staff and the residents in the area some indication, negative or positive" of the city's official position. Councilman Stan Norton proposed the second motion on curbs and sidewalks. He said that "this City Council (should) give assurance that there will be no local urban improvements to mar the rural atmosphere."

Incorporation Debate in the Newspaper

The *Times* of January 22, 1974 presented comments from advocates for annexation and incorporation. Richard Placone said that residents were currently in a "period of education" on pros and cons of annexation, with an "open door policy" for dialogue with the city. Junya Peterson said she was still "plugging away" on a study of the feasibility of incorporating Barron Park as a new city. Placone responded by telling her of a similar study done several



years before by the BPA; "Our man spent a year looking into it, on and off, and found that even if it was approved by the Supervisors and LAFCO, it would be financially infeasible." A more recent study by the late Jane Grubgeld, part of a League of Women Voters project, reached the same conclusion, Placone said. "Furthermore, the Supervisors have made it clear they are not interested in more cities", and the LAFCO policy is against the proliferation of local agencies, he said. Peterson replied that she was aware that the county "frowns on the idea" and that incorporation would be "very difficult, but I can't say yet it would be impossible." She would "have to find out if people wanted to do it", she said.

A Snail's Pace?

The process that had begun towards eventual annexation proceeded slowly and cautiously throughout 1974. To annexation advocates, it may have seemed that things were proceeding at a snail's pace. The difference between the BPA's cautious, "educational" approach and the headlong emotional drives of the past made a striking contrast. In a letter to residents on June 21, the BPA announced that it was requesting the City to undertake a pre-zoning study of all of Barron Park, "...so that the Barron Park community will have an effective tool to use in our efforts to halt re-zoning requests by commercial interests." There were several development requests then pending for commercial and apartment projects that would affect the existing R-1 residential zone. The letter explained the new CS (City Services Zoning Ordinance) and its probable impacts on the zoning process. One message was emphatic; the County was going to turn over its effective power to the City, regardless whether Barron Park was annexed or not. The letter went on to praise the City's responsiveness to Barron Park, both the BPA and individual residents.

In another line of argument, it said "There is some talk going around about "keeping Barron Park free" and "keeping Barron Park out of Palo Alto" and about incorporating as a city and so on. Barron Park residents would be well advised to approach

such enticing statements with caution. Whether Barron Park is a part of the County or part of the City has no bearing on how free we are. Barron Park's FREEDOM WILL CONTINUE TO BE IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE EFFORTS OF ITS CITIZENS TO MAKE ITS COLLECTIVE WISHES KNOWN TO ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES (emphasis in the original)."

The letter concluded by arguing that the new CS-Zone and a pre-zoning study offered tools that would enable Barron Park residents to define their wishes in a zoning pattern that would be adopted for any area (entire or piecemeal) subsequently annexed. It would "...tell developers what we want for our undeveloped land so they could plan in accordance with community wishes."

The BPA Seeks Annexation

In the Autumn, the BPA finally took the wraps off and stood four-square for annexation. On October 20, 1974, the Palo Alto Times reported that the BPA had asked the City to immediately begin formal annexation studies and proceedings. A letter, signed by President Richard Placone and the entire 13-person Board of Directors, asked for the action and volunteered to disseminate information in preparation for an annexation election in 1975. City Manager George Sipel recommended referral to the Planning Commission for study and public hearings. A public meeting was scheduled for October 29 at Barron Park School to "update and inform" residents on annexation issues.

The *San Jose Mercury* reported that Placone said the BPA had set June 10, 1975 as a goal for an election. If annexation is approved, he said that the BPA would request that

the area be admitted to the city as an R-1 residential zone, except that the Roble Ridge and Matadero Hill sections would retain their R-1-E (minimum one acre lot) zoning.

The Annexation Process Begins

The annexation machinery began to grind. By November 20, the Planning Commission had finished its work, finding by unanimous vote that "Barron Park is in the Palo Alto sphere of influence and urban service area and is of a logical configuration and location for annexation to the City of Palo Alto." However, the Commission refused to recommend pre-zoning, because "Palo Alto is in the process of developing a Comprehensive Plan which will set guidelines for zoning and a new Zoning Ordinance which will have new zones and new zoning concepts included. It seems to staff that pre-zoning would be premature because there would be a lot of battles going on about zones that three months later might not exist." This Planning Commission action was unanimously approved by the City Council on December 9, 1974.

Another key step had been made on December 4 when the Santa Clara County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) determined the appropriate boundaries for the area to be annexed. The Times reported the next day, that County Supervisor Sig Sanchez, a LAFCO member, said "This is certainly the most meaningful annexation (in the county) since the formation of LAFCO" 11 years ago. Richard Placone said that petitions would be circulated and a community meeting would be held in January.

On January 15, 1975, the Times reported that city staff would be recommending that the Council make a commitment of no street widening or construction in Barron Park to allay the fears of residents. However, the commitment should be made only after the petition process—which had been authorized the week before—was completed. Pro-annexation residents needed at least 600 signatures of registered voters resident in Barron Park to proceed with an annexation election.



Another Public Meeting

The BPA held yet another in what must have seemed like an endless series of public meetings on annexation, again at Barron Park School, this one on January 21, 1975. A leaflet distributed in advance included a summary of the arguments for annexation and an update of the 1973 analysis of cost impacts (there were no substantive changes). It was noted that the only street improvements planned by staff were resurfacing (mostly slurry sealing) of 19 of the 69 streets, and reconstruction of a short stretch of Paradise Way that was yet undedicated. (Note: as of March, 2001, this stretch is still undedicated and unreconstructed.) Residents were told they could expect a decrease of about 25% in electric rates, 30% in water rates, \$21 annual cost savings in sewerage, "some" savings in refuse services, and an average tax savings of \$12.25 annually.

Signatures Obtained for Annexation Vote

The Times reported on March 8 that enough signatures had been obtained to force a vote on annexation. However, a setback happened on the timing of the election, due to changes in state law covering when such elections could be held. The Times reported on March 18 that the election could not be held June 10, as planned by the BPA, but would have to wait until November. The City Council made it official at their April 22 meeting, scheduling the election for November 4, 1975. They also voted a moratorium on building permits on non-residential property in Barron Park, plus zone changes or lot splits until the election was held. On May 13, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors supported this move by passing a similar six-month moratorium. The only permits to be issued would be for additions to single-family residences.

A Final Public Meeting

Possibly because of the five-month delay in the election, the controversy apparently died down until the Autumn. Or, perhaps, it was simply a case of argument overload—every possible argument on all sides

of the issue had already been made. The next item in the record is the BPA invitation to another public meeting (the final one) at Barron Park School, to be held October 21, 1975. The notice came with seven pages of attachments offering answers to questions posed by residents. They covered fire protection, municipal codes and ordinances compared to county, and community services.

The Fire Protection Issue Flares up Again

It is ironic that the annexation story ended exactly where it began 29 years earlier—with Barron Park facing a serious crisis in fire protection. This was the premier topic at the public meeting; Dan Baker, the Fire Protection District Commission Chair, was present to answer questions. The attachment to the meeting notice explained the essence of the problem. The major fire fighting equipment was a 1949 Van Pelt 600 gallons-per-minute (gpm) pumper and a 1951 FMC 40 gpm high pressure engine. Both were in need of replacement and could no longer be maintained because spare parts were not readily available for the obsolete equipment. The hose also needed to be replaced. In order to replace this equipment, the local tax rate would have to be raised from \$0.137/100 to more than the maximum 0.239 allowed by law. Citizens would have to authorize a higher rate through a tax override election. As the BPA put it, "It would be impossible for a community of this size to support a fire department that would give service like that available upon annexation."

Upon annexation, Barron Park would be upgraded from a fire rating of six to the Palo Alto rating of three, resulting in a \$30/year savings in premiums for a \$60,000 house (which was probably about

the average Barron Park home value in 1975). Some annexation opponents were dismayed that they had not known of the volunteer fire department's serious equipment problems and financial limitations. Speaking personally, I was a fairly new homeowner in Barron Park at the time and was quite concerned about the fire protection level rather than the insurance cost—fire protection was the most compelling reason, to me, to be in favor of annexation.

Comparison of Ordinances and Codes

Discussion of the Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) and comparison to the Santa Clara (County) Ordinance Code (SCOC) focused on topics of particular interest to Barron Park residents. Presumably each selected topic reflected at least one query or complaint. The comparison covered on-street parking, parking of boats, trailers, recreational vehicles, campers, etc., the use of trailers as habitation, and the repair and disassembly of vehicles. Building code provisions included lot and setback requirements, fences and hedges, plastic piping, roofing material restrictions, separate living units ("mother-in-law units"), and bringing buildings "up to code." Building uses included home occupations, number in households, boarders and renters, and non-conforming uses. Landscaping subjects included obstructions to sight or passage, weed abatement, front-yard vegetable gardens. Animal restrictions included the number of dogs and cats, dog leash laws, and farm animals (admitted to be a complex topic, not fully researched by the BPA). Miscellaneous topics were two—fireworks and air-supported domes.

This concludes Part Four of this article. Part five will appear in the next issue and will cover the election and the actual annexation to Palo Alto in 1975. I will incorporate information from City staff files made available to me in December, 2000 by Linnie Melena of Magnolia Way. I am back from my "temporary" three-and-a-half-year job in Pennsylvania and can be contacted at 984 Ilima Way, 493-0689 or dougpac@aol.com.



SENIOR UPDATE

By Mary Jane Leon

Come to the May Fete!

Enjoy an afternoon out in the fine Spring air. Watch the children dance around the May Pole. See what Barron Park artists are creating. And get together with other Barron Park seniors.

We will have some chairs, some shade, some good company, and a table with some give-away information. Hope you can join us.

Community Meeting

Another article elsewhere in this newsletter covers the Community Meeting held

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CAROLING LEADER!

The December 23 Barron Park parade and party really went well, and a major reason was the participation of Bill Liberatore, the Gunn choir director, as Caroling leader and pianist. The Gunn choir is making a trip this spring to a competition in New York City. The package deal of airfare, room, meals, etc. costs each family \$1,000.

Although we sometimes lose sight of the fact, there are many families in Palo Alto who can't afford this kind of money. Bill has been looking for individuals or local businesses that can make a contribution, large or small. Anyone who can help should send a check made out to "Gunn Choir Boosters," addressed to Bill Liberatore, Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto, CA 94306. (Be sure to thank him for his participation in the Barron Park holiday event when you send the check— we want him back next year!) Thanks!

February 4. We just want to mention here what a pleasure it was to see so many seniors in the audience. It is the older householders among us who remember the struggles and the pleasures Barron Park experienced, first as an unincorporated part of Santa Clara County, and then as a new addition to Palo Alto. We are a unique neighborhood, and that fact contributes to our community spirit.

Services for Seniors

Speaking of community spirit, the Seniors Committee of the Barron Park Association is getting its act together, and has some services to offer you. In this issue of the newsletter is a survey, and part of that survey is addressed to seniors. It asks specifically what services you could use right here in your neighborhood. Please fill it out (be sure to give us your name and phone number), and get it back to us.

Many service agencies are having trouble getting volunteers these days. The *San Jose Mercury* ran an editorial recently about the evaporation of community spirit in our land. We are happy to say that we haven't seen that problem in Barron Park. When we asked, at the community meeting, for volunteers to sign up to provide neighborly services to seniors, we had several sign on the dotted line. We now have a cadre of volunteers to support all of the services offered on the enclosed survey.

The volunteer activities will be coordinated by the Seniors Committee. Members are Don Anderson, Art Bayce, Katie Edwards, Mary Jane Leon, Julie Spengler, Harold Stephenson, and Mardell Ward.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Seniors Committee is to identify the needs of our senior community

and, in so far as we are able, to address those needs by locating existing services or developing the services ourselves.

More Information

Nowadays we all have more information thrown at us than we want or can absorb. On the other hand, when we need information about a particular topic, it sometimes seems impossible to find what we need. The Seniors Committee has two items that might be of value to some of you.

1. Transportation-Related Services

Our committee put together a summary of transportation and related services available to seniors. Since the Coop is closing, the data about weekly grocery shopping trips may be particularly pertinent. Other transportation services included might be just what you are looking for.

2. Housing Guide

A couple of years ago, the downtown senior center, Avenidas, put together a comprehensive "Housing Guide" for those who are facing the prospect of having to leave their own homes. It covers the complete range of housing available, from retirement communities to skilled nursing facilities. The booklet used to cost \$5.00 when it was new, but since the prices printed in the booklet may have gotten a little out of date, it is now free. We have a few copies left over from the community meeting.

If you want either the Transportation Guide or the Housing Guide, give Mary Jane a call and she will drop one by your house. Or pick one up at the May Fete on May 6.

You can reach Mary Jane Leon at (650) 493-5248 or by email at rmleon@email.msn.com

BARRON PARK HOLIDAY DONKEY PARADE IS A BIG HIT!

By Don Anderson

Saturday, December 23 marked the first annual Barron Park Holiday Party and Donkey Parade. It was a very successful first time event. More than 100 Barron Park residents, including kids, parents, and seniors participated. There were also many dogs, bikes, scooters, wagons, and skateboards involved, in addition to a drummer, a choir director, and of course two donkeys. Things got started with a procession (led by Perry and Niner) from Bol Park through the neighborhood, featuring caroling led by Bill Liberatore, the Gunn High School choir director. At parade's end there were refreshments served at the Juana Briones Elementary School, and more caroling with Mr. Liberatore at the piano.



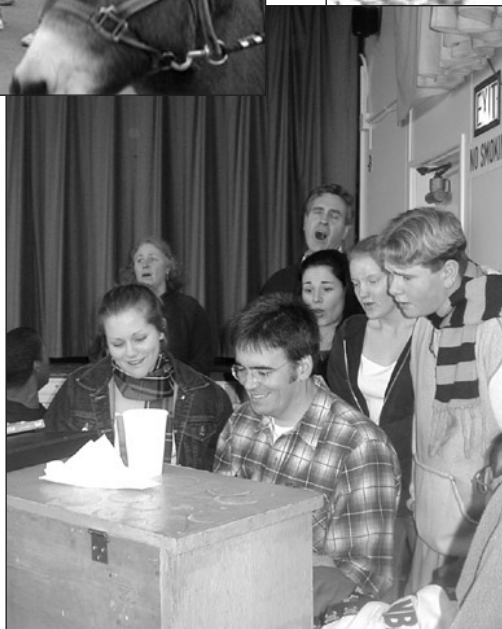
Start of parade at Bol Park. Don Anderson and Eric Struck are leading the donkeys.



Carolers led by Bill Liberatore (directly behind the donkey's ear).



Carolers including Gwen Luce (center right), BPA board member.



Carolers at the party at Juana Briones School, with Bill Liberatore at the piano.

BARRON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Prepared by Maryanne Welton

Community members turned out in force for the Barron Park neighborhood meeting on a sunny Sunday afternoon in February. Over 125 neighbors attended the meeting to talk about their concerns and ideas for issues facing Barron Park—as well as all of Palo Alto and the region. Tables were set up with information about Barron Park Association activities, services for seniors, and the City utility's energy conservation program.

Frank Benest, Palo Alto's City Manager, gave updates on City initiatives affecting Barron Park, such as the El Camino Real design study, protection of neighborhood-serving retail, shuttle and bus service, and the new middle school and other community facilities in south Palo Alto. Cards were handed out for the audience to tell the group "a key issue or concern for the Barron Park neighborhood." The following is a summary of the issues raised during this discussion.

Housing

Many aspects of housing were discussed. Concern about the lack of affordable housing, and in particular the possible loss of the Buena Vista Mobile Home park, were brought up by several people. They supported efforts to encourage affordable housing in Palo Alto and mentioned the proposed teacher housing on the Gunn property. People also mentioned the new, large single family homes which are replacing smaller, existing houses and are concerned how this is changing the neighborhood.

Development

The impact of new commercial and residential development was brought up. In particular, people are concerned about the impact on traffic, infrastructure, energy use, privacy, and compatibility with the neighborhood. There

was support voiced for attracting neighborhood-serving retail to El Camino, particularly a market, that would help spruce up El Camino Real through Barron Park.

Sustainable Community

The subject of energy conservation and alternative transportation was raised. Many community members support the extension of the City shuttle and VTA buses that serve the neighborhood as a way to reduce traffic and allow students to get to and from school and after-school activities. Encouragement for ways to increase bike use and pedestrian activity, such as regular maintenance of the bike paths, was also mentioned. Measures such as these were suggested to help reduce traffic and the speeding that often occurs in the neighborhood.

Gunn/Bol Park/Bike Path

Bol Park, Gunn High School fields and the bike path are considered by many to be an asset to the community and part of the neighborhood's open space. Maintenance and policing of these areas are of concern to the neighborhood. Questions were asked about how to deal with rowdy parties and under-age drinking that occur there. While some are concerned about the loss of open space if the proposed teacher housing site is developed, others support

this type of housing as meeting a community need.

What Can We Do to Make a Difference?

Such a large turnout is evidence that our neighbors care about what happens in our community. After summarizing the main points brought up during the meeting, people interested in these issues were encouraged to get involved in resolving them. The BPA has committees which work with the City and other agencies to address many of these issues and would welcome volunteers. Taking part in the neighborhood meeting provided a forum for raising topics of community concern - - taking an active role in addressing community issues provides the opportunity to help create the type of community where we all want to live.

What Happens Next?

The BPA wants to assess community concerns and issues to help direct our activities during the next year. The neighborhood meeting was the first step. Now we want to hear from those who couldn't attend the meeting. This issue of the BPA newsletter contains a survey. Please complete and return it by June 1st. We will summarize and coordinate the results of the survey and the community meeting to help prioritize BPA activities. We'll also share it with City staff and elected officials to ensure that Barron Park's voice is heard.

Meanwhile, be sure to begin or renew your BPA membership with the form included in this newsletter. And when you see the list of different committees and activities the BPA sponsors, decide how you can help. Get involved. Take part. Let's all work together to make Barron Park a great place to live!



Street Paving in Barron Park

By Will Beckett

Every year the City of Palo Alto reviews a database of streets in Palo Alto due for maintenance. Each street is given a priority based on condition, volume of traffic, number of years since the street was last treated and the number of complaints about the street condition. Based on available money, the streets are selected and go out to bid for work. Last year, no streets in Barron Park qualified but this year eight streets made the list. Some streets that did qualify will not be done this year because there is scheduled work such as a water main replacement on Matadero. The following streets will be repaved between May and September of this year.

Street	From	To
Arbol Drive	Los Robles Avenue	Encina Grande Drive
Baker Avenue	Georgia Avenue	Maybell Avenue
Chimalus Drive	Tippawingo Street	End
El Centro Street	Barron Avenue	La Jennifer Way
Frandon Court	Maybell Avenue	End
Irven Court	Alta Mesa Avenue	End, West
Irven Court	Alta Mesa Avenue	End, East
Laguna Oaks Place	Laguna Avenue	End
Solana Drive	Encina Grande Drive	Cereza Drive
Solana Drive	Cereza Drive	Florales Drive

Those living on these streets were invited to a meeting to hear the details of this work. For the first time all streets that do not have curbs or gutters will have valley gutters added to the street. The plan is to do the valley gutters first, doing one side of the street at a time. After this work is complete, 3.5 inches of the old pavement will be ground down and new pavement will be applied. Each street will receive about 15 days of total construction time.

Priority will be given to El Centro due to its proximity to Barron Park Elementary School. There is no other set schedule for the order of streets. Residents on these streets will be notified 2 weeks in advance of the work about construction times. If you should have any questions please contact the city by calling Woojae Kim, Public Works Engineering, City of Palo Alto P.O. Box 10250 Palo Alto, CA 94303-0862, 329-2446

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Seniors: Mary Jane Leon

Traffic & Streets: Will Beckett

Zoning & Land Use: Maryanne Welton

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

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

BARRON PARK ARTISTS!

Come and display your art at the May Fete.

Sunday, May 6, 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.

Contact Ken Tani at 650-424-0700 or tani_sys@ix.netcom.com
for details and
to reserve a space.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

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