

# BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## JOIN US FOR MAY FETE 2009!

SUNDAY, MAY 17TH AT BOL PARK FROM NOON TO 4PM

**C**ome enjoy live musicians and dancers will perform all afternoon, with a Maypole dance at 2:30.

Bring the family and a blanket and make a picnic of it. Enjoy Driftwood Market sandwiches and bake-sale desserts. Hamburg-

ers and hot dogs will also be for sale. Wear ribbons. There will also be jugglers, games and crafts for the children, donkeys and donkey art, and the history exhibit.

Activities will include face painting for children, donkey parade, history exhibit, fire truck and more. Suggestions for other

activities from the Barron Park community are welcome.

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



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Lynnne Melena, BPA President

This is our once-a-year mailing to all residents in Barron Park. For those of you who do not regularly receive our newsletter (because you are not members), we hope you will decide that the Barron Park Association is a strong, active and committed organization that you want to support.

Over the last year, we sponsored five major events: an annual meeting in February, the May Fete in May, the Green Tour in June, the Welcoming Party in August and the Holiday Party in December. The neat thing is that we seem to draw somewhat different audiences for each event. In other words, the Barron Park Association has something for everyone.

The next big event is the May Fete, scheduled for May 17, so save the date.

We were curious to find out how residents hear about Barron Park Association events, so we have taken some surveys. For the

Green Tour, a new event in 2008, a majority of the 175 people who signed in saw the neighborhood signs, followed closely by email announcements, then postcards and "other." For the approximately 60 people who attended the annual meeting on February 8, neighborhood signs were again in the lead, followed by postcards and then email. So we will continue using all communication channels, but suggestions are welcome.

The Holiday Party in December once again drew a large crowd, including some of the descendants of the Barron family (see photo elsewhere in this newsletter). We also got a really great response to our email requesting permanent donations of table cloths—which will help us reduce waste and definitely make our events more festive. Eight people recycled their family "heirlooms" to the official Barron Park table cloth collection: Emmy Lou Miller, Mary Jane Leon, Karen Saxena, Eleanor Rhodes, Anne Anderson, Brian Null and

Romie Georgia. Thanks to Don Anderson for continuing to organize this annual holiday event.

We probably won't be repeating the Green Tour this year, but the Barron Park Green Team is getting off the ground. About 15 people attended the first two organizational meetings. The first project is likely to be a neighborhood-based class on how to go on a "low carbon diet." As is so often the case, Barron Park is out in front with the first neighborhood Green Team in Palo Alto. Watch for emails announcing future meetings.

Besides special events, the members of the Board continue to be active in citywide initiatives that have a neighborhood bent. These include the Palo Alto Neighborhoods emergency preparedness program, the California Avenue Concept Plan Study, the Charleston/Arastradero Road street redesign study and other issues.

## Free Community Ashtanga Yoga in Bol Park

Dear Neighbors,

Once the weather warms up, I will be teaching a free community yoga class in Bol Park once a week. I am certified in Ashtanga yoga, which is an ancient form of yoga, focusing on quieting the mind using the breath (pranayama), postures (asanas), and movement (vinyasa). It is a dynamic sequence of postures that builds a strong, lean body and a focused, peaceful mind.

If you are interested, please contact me (see below) to get info on dates and times. All levels welcome.

If you'd like to get a jump on things, I am offering an introductory 5 class series (1 hour each) to

anyone interested in learning about Ashtanga yoga and starting an in-home practice. Ashtanga can be modified for begin-

ners, individuals with illness or injury, pregnant women and experienced yoga students who want to deepen their practice.

I will develop a series of poses to meet your specific wellness needs and set you on the path to a sustainable yoga practice. The cost of this series is \$200.

See you at the park!

Namaste,

Anne Nacey  
Maggioncalda  
Certified Ashtanga Instructor  
Ph.D. in Anatomy,  
Duke University  
annemagg AT gmail DOT com  
(650) 575-4843



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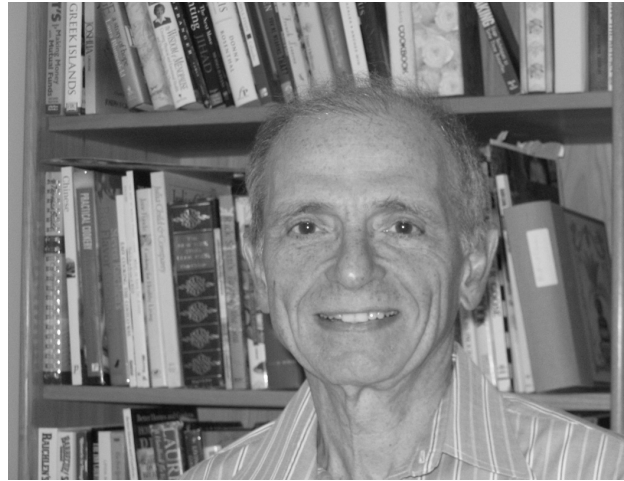
BPA meetings are held the 3rd

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

Call Lynnie Melena for location: 493-2135

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

# Art Liberman Is Newest Board Member



*Art Liberman joined the Board of the Barron Park Association in January, 2009. In the following article, he introduces himself to the neighborhood.*

**M**y wife, Annie, and I first moved to our house on Chimalus in the mid 1970s, before Barron Park chose to become part of Palo Alto. I voted in that election, but four years later a new job took us to the East Coast.

We kept in touch with Barron Park during the years we were away by remaining members of the Barron Park Association. The Association's newsletter was our lifeline. I read about the several environmental issues that had arisen over the years. There was concern over the groundwater contamination caused by chemicals leaking from underground tanks. And then I heard that several Barron Park residents had stepped up and forced the parties responsible for the leaks in the Stanford Research Park to include the neighborhood in their monitoring and remediation plans. I also heard about the spate of toxic gas releases in the 1980s, which led the Barron Park Association to stage an evacuation drill.

But when we moved back in 2004, Barron Park seemed almost untouched by all the activity on its periphery. Still no sidewalks, many of the same friendly residents, and the same rural atmosphere that makes Barron Park such a unique neighborhood.

Some larger houses were now in places where small cottages had been before. Mickey, who our daughters vividly remember, was gone, but Perry and Niner were in the donkey pasture.

Most, but not all of the companies who used toxic chemicals and gases had left the Research Park. In 2006 toxic vapors from an industrial accident at CPI drifted into Barron Park. The neighborhood was affected

because city regulations allowed companies to place large amounts of extremely hazardous materials very close to homes. This posed a substantial risk to residents and left them with an unacceptable margin of safety. Over the next year, several of us on Chimalus Drive organized and worked constructively with City staff to effect changes in the city zoning code. As a result of the local neighborhood activity, and with support of the Barron Park Association at the Council meeting, Palo Alto is now at the forefront of California cities using zoning to protect residents from accidents with hazardous materials.

While I have had a long connection with Barron Park, I have never served the community before. I am delighted to be on the Board now, working with a very dedicated group of neighborhood leaders. I want to focus my efforts on educating residents on the issues that affect them in our neighborhood, particularly environmental quality, hazardous materials and health and safety.

I also want to help residents who are dealing with these issues to bring the changes they desire. The governmental regulatory network can be confusing, but coordinated action by residents, supported by the larger neighborhood association, can result in positive change.

# A Day in the Lives of Barron Parkers in 1949

Historical Fiction By Douglas Graham, Barron Park Historian

## Part One—Richard’s Morning

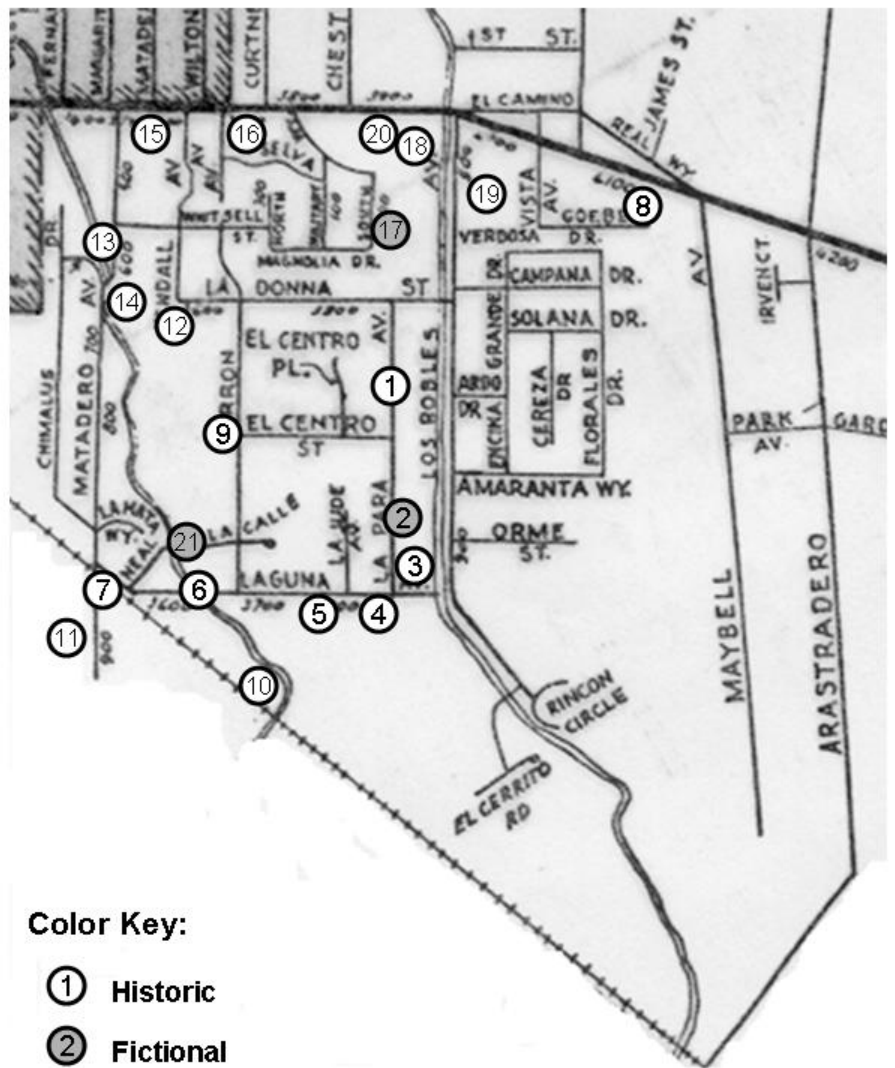
### The Oak Tree in the Street

It was Wednesday morning, May 4, 1949, and Richard Stouffer was starting off to work. He kissed his wife Anne goodbye, grabbed his briefcase, and stepped from his front door of his house on La Para Avenue. He stopped for a moment to enjoy his front yard, with the close-clipped lawn bordered with neat flower beds blooming in the early morning light filtering down from the neighbor’s large old oak tree. It was about the same age and size of the one that still grew in the center of La Para Avenue several hundred feet from his house in the direction of La Donna Avenue (see photograph A and point number 1 on the street map accompanying this story). Richard shook his head with a wry smile and thought to himself: “What a crazy place we live in—Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Los Altos and Barron Park all have old oak trees growing in the middle of their streets because we can’t bear to let them go. I guess that’s part of what makes our neighborhood unique.”

### La Pera becomes “La Para”

The Stouffer family had lived in Barron Park for the past eight years. They had rented a cottage in the 500 block of Barron Avenue while Richard attended the graduate School of Business at Stanford during most of World War II. Then when he got his MBA and landed a good job in 1940, they started looking around. They looked mostly in Barron Park, because they liked

## Barron Park Street Map - 1949



1. Heritage oak tree in the middle of La Para Avenue
2. Stouffer home at 849 La Para (fictional people and address)
3. General area where “Japanese” farmers grew tomatoes before World War II
4. 3890 La Para, home of Ernie and Lena Johnson in 1949 (still there and occupied by a family member)
5. 3988 Laguna, home of John Babick in 1949 (house is no longer there; John’s son Nick occupies a newer house at 3998 Laguna)
6. 1933 Laguna Avenue bridge over Matadero Creek

7. Site of “Neal Station” in 1949 (a Southern Pacific RR flag stop)
8. Site of Janet Thain’s house in 1949 (now an empty lot with a billboard)
9. Barron Park School
10. Site of the “barn” on the Bols’ horse pasture
11. House of the family that had the dairy cow
12. Kendall Avenue entrance to the Bol Tract Eichler development
13. Bol Water Co. well, pump houses and storage tank

14. Josina Avenue entrance to the Bol Tract—first houses built in tract
15. Slinger’s Boat Works
16. Approximate location of Paul’s Grocery
17. Cynthia’s home at 3876 Magnolia South (fictional person and address)
18. Chat-and-Chew Restaurant (where Blockbuster is now)
19. McElroy Lumber Yard (where the Villas de Las Plazas condominiums are now)
20. Texaco Gas Station (now Jim Davis’ Valero)
21. 3647 La Calle Ct, the Diekemann’s home (fictional people and address)





**Photo A: Heritage Oak Tree in La Para Avenue 1968**

the quiet, semi-rural neighborhood and besides, the prices were right. Finally they chose 849 La Para, a small house that had just been built across from some pear orchards. Although the Stouffers didn't know it at the time, La Para meant "Pear" and had been named for the extensive pear orchards along it and El Centro. Originally, it had the correct Spanish spelling "La Pera," before an ignorant county sign maker made a new street sign with the wrong spelling. (See photograph B—a pear orchard probably on La Para or El Centro. The Stouffers' fictional house was at point number 2 on the map).

**The "Japanese" Farmers**

Richard turned left and walked up the street on his usual route to the train stop. As he walked he continued thinking about the neighborhood. He had heard that the land to his left had been farmed by several families; a Filipino group and a Japanese nisei family who first grew strawberries and then tomatoes on it (see number 3). He wondered if the Japanese farmers had been forced out in the big resettlement program in 1942, or if they had left voluntarily to go somewhere else... In any case, they hadn't come back to Barron Park after the war. Nobody in the neighborhood wanted to talk about that—someday he would have to ask Ernie Johnson or one of the other old-timers he had met.

**Ernie and Lena Johnson**

According to Ernie, the strawberries were planted after Driscoll and Reiter from Watsonville bought the whole area from the old Barron Estate Company—in 1919, Richard thought Ernie said. Ernie seemed to know everybody and everything about Barron Park—he ran one of the two private water companies that supplied everybody with water from deep wells. As he was musing about the past, he turned right and walked down Laguna Avenue towards the railroad. He passed Ernie and Lena

Johnson's house on the left, at 3890 Laguna, a trim little house with nice plantings and a curving gravel driveway in front (see number 4 on the map). The house was built in 1931 but the Johnsons had moved there about 1935. Before that, they had originally come to Barron Park in 1925 or 1926 and had built their first house on weekends. It was also on Laguna and was

heated by a coal stove.

**Walking to the Train on Laguna Avenue**

As he walked northwest on Laguna Avenue, Richard passed the entrance to La Jude Avenue (now San Jude) on the right. In the 1930s, it had been a fashion in California to give Spanish names to new streets and neighborhoods. Several streets in Barron Park, like Donna, had been Hispanicized by adding the article "La," and several were faux Spanish, like "La Jude." After La Jude, on the left there was a long lane that ran southwest to the Chiotti house (this was the future Paradise Way). You could see the house from Laguna, and it was by the edge of the Stanford lands, which were cow pastures for Piers Dairy. Next on the left was John Babick's house, set well back from the street, and his young pear orchard (number 5 on the map). There were only a few houses on Laguna Avenue: it almost looked like a rural road, with orchards, tomato fields, hayfields and mailboxes along the edge of the blacktop.

**Neal "Station"**

Richard glanced at his watch and picked up the pace; it was still a 3- or 4-minute walk to the train stop. He crossed Matadero Creek on the small, concrete 1933 bridge



**Photo B: Pear Orchard—Identified as on Laguna Avenue but more likely La Para or El Centro (can anyone identify the house that shows slightly at the right background?) Woman and child are unidentified.**



**Photo C: Laguna Avenue 1946, view southeast from Matadero Creek Bridge (at present-day Bol Park)**

the county had built. (See photo C and point number 6 on the map). He passed the Bol horse pasture on the left (later a donkey pasture and now Bol Park). Neal “Station” was really just a flag stop (you waved to the engineer as the train approached if you wanted it to pick you up). There was a tiny wooden shelter for people who waited for the morning commuter train on the Southern Pacific branch line running through Barron Park (see photograph D and point number 7 on the map). The flag stop was named for the family that had owned the land along Matadero, including La Mata Court, up to Neal Court). The tracks ran from Barron Park on through the Stanford Land and crossed El Camino Real near the Currier Motel, then past the old cannery on Lambert Avenue (today’s Fry’s Electronics) to a wye beyond Park Boulevard, where they connected with the main SP line to San Francisco.

Richard hurried a little more as he first heard, then saw the steam engine chuffing to a stop (see photograph E). It was pulling two cars. He greeted the other three commuters at the stop as they boarded the second car and headed for their regular seats. He begged off an offer to play cards, saying he really had to work this morning—he had several loan applications to review on the way to the city. Richard worked at the Bank of America headquarters in San Francisco’s financial district, where he was a Senior Loan Officer. His University of Pennsylvania degree, class of 1931, his years at Mellon Bank in Philadelphia, and the MBA he got from Stanford during the

war gave him a straight career path toward an early Vice-Presidency at the bank, if he played his cards right.

**David Packard, Matadero Avenue Homeowner**

As he sat down, he was thinking of the conversation with his wife last night. Anne had been wondering if they shouldn’t consider a move to Los Altos—a better address—like that ambitious young man, just a little younger than them, who ran his own company making electronic components. He was moving from Matadero Avenue to Los Altos, even though he had lived ten years in Barron Park and was still the President of the Palo Alto Unified School District. David Packard was his name, and Anne was proud to know both him and his lovely wife Lucille. They were very down-to-earth people and good neighbors—Anne and Richard were even on a first-name basis with them. The Packards lived in a nice little house at 724 Matadero. Richard was sure that David was going places

and would continue to be an important man and a good man to know. Maybe the Hewlett-Packard Company would even be a good loan customer for the bank. As Richard settled down in his seat and opened his briefcase, his last thoughts before starting the workday were on his wife. Even though she was also a Penn graduate, she was a really good mother and homemaker and seemed to genuinely enjoy the role.

**Part Two—Anne’s Morning**

Next after Richard she needed to get Peter and Annie and Debbie fed and off to school—if Debbie’s demands would just let up a little. Six-year-old Debbie had been up and had gotten herself dressed. But now she wanted her breakfast and Anne had barely had time to remove the overnight facial cold cream before she was off and running the breakfast steeplechase. Peter, the fifteen-year-old, couldn’t find his sneakers—the new basketball shoes—and was yelling at his sister Annie about something. Annie couldn’t find her homework. Anne couldn’t understand why sixth-graders were being given homework, anyway. Annie was only eleven—wouldn’t the school district let their kids just be kids a little longer? In her day no teacher had given homework until high school! Now Peter was complaining because Annie had eaten the last of the Post Shredded Wheat and he was going to have to eat Kellogg’s Cornflakes. Debbie needed help buttering her toast.

Kids! She had thought they were all done with having them in 1938 when Annie was



**Photo D: SPRR Flag Stop at “Neal,” probably in 1939 or 1940**



**Photo E: SRR steam commuter (or possibly "Big Game") train, prior to 1957 when steam engines were replaced with diesels**

born. But she guessed they had gotten careless or something and along had come Debbie—her lovely darling Debbie—in 1944! It had put a crimp in her plans for developing a career of her own. After that they became members of the Palo Alto Area Planned Parenthood and she was using one of the new diaphragms of an improved design—supposedly almost a sure thing if used with the spermicidal cream. Oh, if someone would just invent a pill you could take!

Peter yelled "Bye, Mom" as he barreled out the door. He must have found his sneakers. "I've got to hurry or I'll be late for the bus" was the last thing she heard. He was on his way to Palo Alto High School.

### **Annie's and Debbie's School**

Annie would leave in a few minutes to walk the three blocks to Barron Park School, where she was in Miss Janet Thain's class. Miss Thain was an enormously popular teacher who lived in a big old farmhouse on El Camino, with greenhouses full of flowers behind it. (It is now an empty lot with a billboard, between the Barron Square condominiums and the Townhouse Motel—see number 8 on the map. Thain Way, which provides access to the Barron Square condos, is named for her.)

All the teachers at Barron Park School were so enthusiastic—they were glad to be working in a brand-new school with a PTA that was active and involved (the school was—and is—at number 9 on the map). Along with the parents, they did things

like organize walking field trips for the younger children, up to the Bol's "farm" on Roble Ridge to see the horses (number 10 on the map), and to another neighbor's property on Matadero Hill where there was a cow to be milked as a demonstration (number 11).

Now Annie was out the door—leaving her sweater behind, as usual. She would walk down the block to her friend Ginnie's house and then they'd walk together along El Centro to the school on Barron Avenue. Anne got Debbie's sweater and helped her into it. She called out to Debbie's fast-departing back "Goodbye sweetheart. Watch out for cars and bikes and be sure to say good morning to your teacher." Debbie was so proud to be allowed to walk to kindergarten on her own. When school started in September, Anne had insisted that Annie walk with her for the first month or so, until Anne felt she would be safe on her own. El Centro was a quiet street without much traffic. In a few years, when the area would probably fill up with new housing tracts, it might be different. "I suppose, then, we'll see mothers walking their five-year-olds to school," she thought. Now Anne could finally start her morning. She called her friend Bonnie and made arrangements to pick her up early for the ten o'clock meeting.

### **The First Eichler Development**

Anne drove the Stouffer's blue 1940 Chevrolet Deluxe 4-door sedan slowly down La Donna Avenue, turning wide to get in Bonnie's narrow driveway. Her

friend was waiting in front of the house, and got in immediately. They were not due at Cynthia's house, just three blocks away, for about 30 minutes. "I had in mind to take a look at those new houses they are building on the Bol property. I heard they are really modern. The builder's name is Ike-something..." Bonnie replied "Eichler." Yeah, I'd like to see them, too. Nobody has heard of this builder but it seems that his houses may just be the coming thing." Anne crossed Barron Avenue and the new development was immediately visible to their left (number 12 on the map). "It looks like they are going to extend Kendall, and there will be a new street from Matadero that will bend around and connect to Barron by the school" (the street was laid out in 1949 and named Josina, for Mrs. Bol). She drove over to Matadero Avenue, turned left and parked next to the Bol Water Company's tall storage tank and pump house by the creek (number 13 on the map). They got out and walked around and through one of the houses under construction (number 14) "I think I might like all that glass and exposed wood, and the walls that don't go up to the ceiling. It would be so light and airy" said Anne. Her friend looked dubious but didn't reply. (See photograph F, which is of a 1950 Eichler in El Centro Gardens. It is similar to the first Eichler houses on Josina Avenue in 1949)

### **The Water Companies**

As Anne started up the car again, Bonnie, looking at the 25,000-gallon steel tank towering over the car, said "What do you really think about these water companies we've got in Barron Park? Will they be able to keep up with the growth here?" Anne replied "You are on the Bol company line, aren't you? I've heard they're not too bad, except up on Roble Ridge. We are on the Los Robles Company line, and sometimes on Sundays we can hardly get any pressure at all." She laughed. "It's a good thing that Saturday is bath night and Monday is wash day." She turned the car around and drove to El Camino. "I don't know how much longer we will be depending on them—Richard has heard that Palo Alto may take them over." The private water companies sold out to the city after 1949: the Bol Company was the last to go, in 1953.



Photo F: 1950 Eichler home in El Centro Gardens, similar to the ones constructed on the Bol Tract in 1949

### The El Camino Strip

As they turned from Matadero onto El Camino Real, Bonnie said “I wonder what’s going to happen at the Fire District Meeting tonight? Bill went to the last meeting and they voted to ask the city to contract out fire protection to our new district.” “Well,” Anne said, “Richard told me that the city is very unlikely to agree to do that, so we will have to set up our own fire department, and depend on neighbors to volunteer for fireman training.” She knew Bonnie was thinking about this because they were passing Slinger’s Boat Works which functioned as a political center and informal “town hall” for unincorporated Barron Park. The Board of the new Fire District, just established in January, met there (see photograph G, number 15 on the map). Chet Slinger was the first President of the Board, and later in 1949 became the first Fire Chief.

Anne said “I hope you don’t mind, but I’ve got to pick up something at Paul’s Grocery for a minute.” Bonnie said “Not at all.” The grocery store was just past the liquor store-bar combination next to Slinger’s. Paul’s was another social center like Slinger’s, where you often met neighbors—it was the first real grocery store in the Barron park area, and very popular until eclipsed by the All-American Market later on (number 16). After getting her grocery item, Anne carefully backed out of the diagonal parking into the right-hand traffic lane of El Camino. A car swerved past them, horn blaring. Bonnie commented, “That guy sure is a rude so-an-so.” After Paul’s they drove by a pottery store, then La Fosse

Music store, and then turned into Military Way between the two liquor stores on the corners. A left on La Selva and a right on Magnolia took them to Cynthia’s house at 3876 Magnolia Drive South (number 17).

### The Stitch-and-Gab Society Confronts Annexation

Cynthia welcomed her guests with coffee, tea and a platter of mixed donuts. “They are from the Chat-and-Chew,” she said. Bonnie commented, “They make the best donuts of any place around here, don’t they.” The Chat-and-Chew, on the corner of Los Robles, had been an El Camino landmark since 1929 when it was begun as the Buena Vista Café (number 18, and see photograph H).

As the women arrived, they each brought a piece of handwork. Anne’s job this morning was to put patches on both knees of a pair of Peter’s blue jeans. Bonnie was finishing the hem on a new dress she had bought. One older lady was working industriously on a needlework pattern that she would frame and hang in her kitchen. The chatter level was high when one of the women, Alice Miller, brought up the subject of annexation to Palo Alto and started arguing in favor of it, and suddenly the room was silent until Cynthia gently said, “I think our men fight about that too much with each other. Let’s not get started on it in our group. Anne and Bonnie nodded agreement and someone else started a conversation about the Barron Park PTA.

As they were leaving at Noon, the two women looked at each other and laughed. Bonnie said “Alice should have known bet-

ter than to have brought up such a sensitive topic. After all that fighting with the city the year before last, and Palo Alto insulting us so much, it was no surprise to me that Barron Parkers voted against it last year. We’ll be much better off on our own.” Anne didn’t reply. She was sorry that Alice brought the controversial topic up in their social group, but she wasn’t sure she completely agreed with Bonnie, either.

### Annie’s and Debbie’s Polliwog Hunt

Annie got home shortly after three o’clock. She came bursting in the front door and wanted to know if she could go with her friend Jennie to the creek. “It’s full of polliwogs, Mom. There are hundreds...thousands even!” Anne told her yes—if she would take her little sister along. Debbie had already been home since one o’clock and was eager to get out of the house. They both ran to the kitchen to find jars. Last year Anne had gone along, and had been amazed at how many tadpoles there were in Matadero Creek, which seemed to have water in it until well into the summer on the stretch up by the Bols’ horse pasture. The kids usually climbed down into the creek by the railroad bridge, so Anne warned Annie again to stay off the tracks and to hold Debbie’s hand if a train came while they were there. Last year one of the trains had had to stop at the Bols’ home just beyond the bridge, when the Bols’ goats got loose and wouldn’t get off the tracks.

While the kids were out, Anne got some housework done and called the baby-sitter to make sure she hadn’t forgotten to come tonight. The Stouffers were going to the movies tonight with the Diekemans, who lived over on La Calle Court.

When the girls got home, they were wet, muddy and excited but didn’t have any tadpoles in their jars. Annie said “We let them go, Mommy. I know they couldn’t live here and they need to grow up in the creek.” Debbie chimed in; “Some polliwogs have legs, Mommy!,” so Anne explained to her how the tadpoles slowly turned into frogs.

### Thoughts on Leaving Barron Park

After the girls went to their room, Anne was thinking again about how much she wanted a bigger house. She thought; “Annie is almost twelve now, she really needs a room of her own, like Peter has.

But maybe we don't have to leave Barron Park to find the right house. A lot of the houses along the creeks have four bedrooms, and some on Magnolia Drive do, too. We should look some more. I know some of the up-and-coming people like the Packards are leaving here, but there are plenty of nice people who won't."

**Peter's Afternoon**

Anne was getting a little concerned. Peter should have been home more than a half hour ago. Just then, he came in the back door with his armload of binders and books. "Oh, man, these books are sure heavy. I wish I had a better way to carry them. Everybody complains about it, but they give us so much homework that we have to bring them home almost every day! I've got a trigonometry test tomorrow, by the way, so I can't take care of the girls tonight." "I know, Peter, that's why I arranged the baby-sitter to come. It's Mrs. Macon from over on Los Robles." Peter replied "Oh yeah, the old bag who lives behind the McElroy Lumber Yard (See number 19). I saw her this afternoon." Anne frowned at him and said "Peter, that's not a nice way to talk!" Peter got himself two slices of Wonder Bread and began buttering them for a snack. "I know, Mom. It's just that she's so old I don't know what to say to her. She grew up on a farm where they had to go to town in a horse and buggy. Why don't we get a television set, like the Maynard's have? Then the girls wouldn't need a baby-sitter; I could be here in case anything happened." Anne said "They are still too expensive. And besides, you could get eyestrain looking at that tiny black-and-white picture screen. And there's only one TV station that we can get here. We'll wait until we can get both of the stations in San Francisco."

Anne looked at him with what she hoped was a piercing glare. "And by the way, mister, where have you been! You should have been home 40 minutes ago." He grinned at her and said "Oh, Mom, don't get your tail feathers all twisted. I stopped with the guys at Chat and Chew and had a donut and coke. And don't worry, it only cost fifteen cents and I still have some of last week's allowance left." He finished his toast and picked up his books. "I'm going to go work some trig problems and listen to the radio." Peter had just been given a

small radio for his fifteenth birthday and listened to it for hours every day.

**Supper at the Stouffers'**

Anne looked around the kitchen table at her family and was quietly proud. She and Richard were lucky to have such cheerful, outgoing kids. She was secretly worried a little about Annie, who was hitting some problems at school and with friends, but she would probably get through it O.K. What really worried her was Peter's growing interest in girls. She suspected that it wasn't just "the guys" that he had donuts with at the Chat and Chew. Maybe she should have a talk with Maggie the waitress and find out what's going on, hmm?

After the dishes were all passed and everyone had been served, there was silence for a minute as everyone "tucked in" to the supper. Then Annie spoke up and asked her mother, "Where are you going tonight?" Richard replied "We're going to the Fine Arts on California Avenue to see a new movie with Anne Sheridan and Tyrone Power. It should be good." Peter looked at Annie and said "You might like that one, it's sure to be all kissy-kissy." Annie glared at him and then asked her mother "What's the second feature?" "A new Abbott and Costello," she answered. "Oh Mom," all three kids said in unison. "Can we go, too?" Richard answered, "No, you know we are going with the Diekemans and this is 'grown-ups only' night." Peter leered at Annie and said "yeah, there will be lots of kissy-kissy going on in the back rows." Richard said, "Now, that's enough of that! You kids can see the

Abbott and Costello Saturday morning at the ten-cent show." "No, Dad" chorused the three. "Don't you remember it just went up to fifteen cents?" "We need bigger allowances," added Peter. Anne said, looking at Richard, everything's going up. Gas at Joe Weiler's Texaco Station cost me 23 cents a gallon this afternoon! (See number 20 on the map—now Jim Davis' Valero Station). And this ground beef you are all wolfing down was 32 cents a pound at Paul's Grocery. The household allowance needs some adjustment, too, or we'll all be eating beans." The doorbell buzzed—it was Mrs. Macon, and the discussion ended. Richard decided it wasn't the time to announce to the kids that he had just gotten a nice raise. He would never hear the end of their begging for a TV set if he did.

**The California Good Life**

Richard and Anne decided to walk over to the Diekemans' home on La Calle Court. It was a lovely cool May evening, the kind of weather that reminded them why they had chosen to live in the Bay Area 2500 miles from their extended families and the places they had grown up in. It hadn't been too hard to get used to, because almost all the newer residents in Barron Park were from some other state, and the younger men were mostly war veterans who got a taste of "California Living" on their way to the fighting in the Pacific Theatre. The Stouffers would shudder to think of what some of their neighbors had gone through—there were several war widows they knew in the neighborhood, and others who had lost sons or brothers. They were



Photo G: Chet Slinger's Boat Shop on El Camino Real, probably late





**Photo H: Chat and Chew Restaurant (where Blockbuster is now), probably 1940s**

patriotic, of course, like everyone else, but they were so glad that Richard had been too old for the draft early in the war and then by the time they started scraping the bottom of the barrel, Debbie had come along—the third child—and he was off the hook.

### **The Diekemanns**

The Diekemanns had a still new, pre-war home on the bank of Matadero Creek at 3647 La Calle Court (Number 21 - a fictional address to fit a fictional family). Hans and Gisela Diekemann had emigrated from Germany in 1934 right after Hitler took over and before the borders were closed. Hans had come directly to a position in the Stanford Physics Department. Although they were older than the Stouffers, and foreign, and part of the academic world, not business like Richard, they had met at one of the neighborhood meetings about the first annexation movement in 1947 and immediately the four of them had hit it off. Hans often invited them to Stanford cultural events and Richard reciprocated by introducing the Diekemanns to nights out in San Francisco. Tonight they were going to see how they would like going to movies together, and there would be dessert at the Diekemann home afterwards.

### **A Pleasant Surprise**

Hans and Gisela were ready to go when the Stouffers walked up to their front door. “We have a surprise for you!” exclaimed Hans. “You will be the first to ride in it,” and they showed Richard and Anne a brand-new 1948 Buick Sedan in the driveway. “It has an automatic transmission” Hans pointed out as he drove out of the

neighborhood. It was the first time Richard and Anne had ridden in a car with an automatic gearshift mechanism, and Anne had a moment of envy, Although she had become an excellent driver over the years, she still remembered the misery involved in learning to coordinate the clutch and manual gearshift properly with the accelerator to ensure a smooth start.

The Sheridan-Power film was a hit with all four of them, but they decided not to stay for the second feature. The women didn’t care much for slapstick humor and both Hans and Richard thought that Abbott and Costello compared poorly to Laurel and Hardy, especially compared to the earlier duo’s silent films. Hans commented, “But the kids would like it, yah?” Also, the next day was a workday so they decided to head back, have their dessert and get to bed at a reasonable hour.

### **The Tree Frog Symphony Orchestra**

When they pulled up in La Calle Court and Hans shut the engine off, the sound of the tree frogs in the creek and all around them was nearly deafening. Anne said, I thought we had a lot of frogs around us, but there must be thousands of them here.” Hans said “It only sounds that way—but there are a lot. Come, walk with us around to our patio by the creek—I want you to hear something nice. As they walked around the house, the frog noise suddenly diminished. When they reached the top of the high creek bank, it stopped completely, and in the sudden silence, they could hear the frogs way up and down the creek, then they too grew silent and for about 30 seconds there were only a few very distant peeps to be heard. Then a nearby frog

called, and two or three answered, and then the sound began to build again, reaching the previous crescendo in a minute or two. They could hear waves of sound traveling up and down the creek. “Isn’t it marvelous?” asked Gisela. “It is one of the things we love best about living here in Barron Park. I hope nothing ever happens to change it.”

And so ended another day in the lives of Barron Parkers in 1949, sixty years ago this spring.

### **Author’s Note:**

This story is, of course fictional. The Stouffers and their friends are all fictional and are not meant to resemble anyone living or dead—especially not anyone I have ever known. Strict journalistic disclosure principles require me to inform you that, when I was quite young, my family possessed a 1940 Chevrolet Deluxe Sedan, which I loved but never got to drive.

Please take note that the Bols, Ernie and Lena Johnson, John Babick, Janet Thain and Joe Weiler were all real people, and I hope I have described them accurately. If not, the fault is mine alone. The Packards of Hewlett-Packard, The Lucille Packard Children’s Hospital, and the Defense Department during the Nixon Administration were the very same people who lived for ten years in a modest home at 724 Matadero Avenue, and who helped bring about the construction of Barron Park School.

There really was an oak tree in the middle of La Para Avenue, for many years. There really were a “million” frogs in Matadero Creek before the VA Hospital killed them all in 1983 by flushing industrial-strength wheelchair cleanser down the creek. The frogs started coming back a few years ago, but the population is miniscule compared to what it was before 1983.

I hope you have enjoyed this foray into historical fiction. Let me know what you think—would you like to meet the Stouffers again at a different point in Barron Park History? If you have any questions or comments, or just want to throw brickbats (metaphorical only, please) feel free to contact me at [bpaonline.org/411/dgraham.html](http://bpaonline.org/411/dgraham.html), or (650) 493-0689.



# Minimizing WiFi Conflicts with Neighbors

By Doug Moran

**T**wo years ago, I could routinely detect nine of my neighbors' wireless computer (WiFi) networks. Now, with the very same equipment, I can detect 16 to 38 such networks, depending on weather conditions (moisture in the air absorbs energy from the signal, dropping some below detectable levels). If near neighbors set up their wireless network unaware of each other, they can slow each other's networks. Advice on how to find if this could be a problem and what to do about it can be found on the BPA website at <http://www2.bpaonline.org/advice/wifi-etiquette.html>



**Descendants of our neighborhood namesake, Edward Barron (1831–1893) attended our Holiday Parade and Songfest on December 20, 2008. From left to right: Alyona and Edward Strachan (great-great-great grandson), visiting from England; Steve Dunne (great-great-grandson), resident of Portola Valley; Jason and Michael Dunne, Steve's sons and great-great-great grandsons of Edward.**

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association  
724 Barron Avenue  
Palo Alto, California 94306

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## IT'S MEMBERSHIP TIME

By John St. Clair III, Membership Chair

**T**ICK ...TICK...TICK...Whether you are a new or renewing member, it's time to join the Barron Park Association. Yes, the annual sign up is near. Deadline for sign up is April 30th.

Please complete and return the enclosed membership form by April 30th. Benefits of joining BPA now:

- o Ensures you'll receive all four newsletters, and any other membership materials, like the Baby Sitter List. Remember sitters or recipients must sign up every year, as the list is constantly updated.

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

- o You will automatically be added to the BPA-News Email list, (provided you provide us with your current email address).

This will help keep you informed about what's happening in Barron Park.

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

We look forward to receiving your membership form, or sign up online at <http://www.bpaonline.org/bpa-membership-form.html>.

### EMAIL LISTS

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

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

# Barron Park Sponsors its Own Cub Scout Pack 52

By John King



For many years, the Barron Park Association has sponsored Cub Scout Pack 52, right here in Barron Park! The pack consists of

Tiger, Wolf and Bear Dens for 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders, and a Webelos I and Webelos II den for 4th and 5th graders. The dens meet at various times and various days every two weeks and the entire Pack meets once a month for a general meeting full of activities and games. Meetings usually occur at Juana Briones or Barron Park schools. Activities include camping, hiking, overnights at the Oakland Zoo and the Pampanito Submarine, lots of learning and crafts as well as the venerable Pinewood Derby! If you have a boy interested in cub scouts, contact Cubmaster Jeff Smith at 650-714-1595 or John W. King at 650-483-2710 for more information.



## RSVP: Free Home Services for Senior & the Homebound

RSVP is an annual week-long community outreach program that takes place from May 4th to 9th. The program provides free assistance to qualified seniors who cannot otherwise perform certain household tasks due to physical or financial constraints. Some common services performed are washing windows, changing furnace filters, turning mattresses, vacuuming, changing light bulbs, replacing smoke detectors batteries and other similar household tasks.

These are just a few chores that keep a home in good order. Unfortunately, these jobs may seem simple to some people, but they can be taxing and insurmountable to many seniors and disable adults.

The REALTOR® Service Volunteer Pro-

gram (RSVP), which operates through your local Association of Realtors®, promotes safety in the home and assistance to the elderly. The program is one way Realtors and Affiliates can give back to their communities and perhaps

help seniors and the homebound maintain their independence and stay in their homes longer.

For more information on the program or to get an application contact Lydia Kou, (650) 996-0028.

Application deadline is April 10, 2009.



## BOL PARK BIKE PATH BEAUTIFICATION: COMMUNITY WEEDING

By Doug Moran



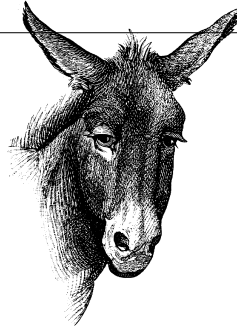
An informal group of Barron Park residents has started an effort to beautify the bike path running next to Bol Park. Last fall, wildflowers were planted in several small patches, and the long-term goal is to significantly reduce the weeds (including grasses). We plan to do so by manually pulling weeds in certain areas before they go to seed. So if you are in the park and see people pulling weeds, please consider lending us a hand for a few minutes-many hands make light work.

The problem we are facing is that the weeds mature much earlier than the native plants, so the City mows this area-to control fire risks-before the wildflowers and native grasses can propagate. This area was seeded with such plants after the flood-control channel was built under the bike path (mid-1990s) and they currently thrive only where they aren't mowed, for example the lupine along the path near the Gunn football field. The City is supportive and has said that they will not mow those areas where our weeding has reduced the weed to a point where they don't present a fire hazard. By the time you read this, I expect the foxtail grass will be close to ripe. It has the harpoon-like seeds that stick in your clothing and can cause serious problems for dogs.

The first efforts will be announced on the BPA-news email list. If you aren't on the list, send me an email and I will send notifications to you ([dmoran@dougmoran.com](mailto:dmoran@dougmoran.com)). By the way, you really should consider being on the BPA-news list.

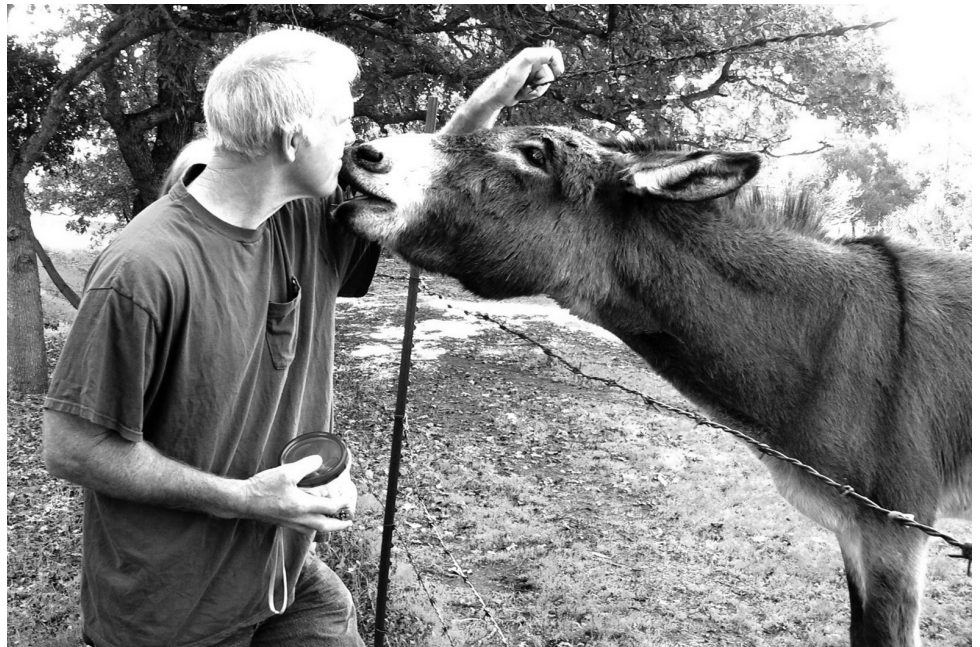
## Help Support the Barron Park Donkeys!

All those who care about Perry and Niner seek to guarantee their proper on-going care and shelter, as well as to ensure that assets will be available for health concerns as the donkeys age. The handlers hope that those generous neighbors who have contributed in the past will consider increasing their support this year. Contributions for the donkeys' care may be sent to: The Palo Alto Donkey Project, ACTERRA (Action for a Sustainable



Earth), 3921 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303-4303. The check must be made out to "ACTERRA-Palo Alto Donkey Fund." All of the above must be included.

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



Niner gets up close and personal with visitor George Slate.

### BPA NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

We have created PDF files of past newsletters. See the complete newsletters, including full-color photos!

The web editions of the BPA Newsletters usually appear one or two months after the paper editions are mailed. The files may take awhile to download (sizes given in advance).

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

PDF full color newsletter archive: [www.bpaonline.org/www2/BP-News/index.html](http://www.bpaonline.org/www2/BP-News/index.html)

# B U S I N E S S B E A T

By Mircea Voskerician, BPA Business Liaison



## Curves Focuses on Women's Fitness in a Friendly Setting

When David and Jennifer Giarritta decided to purchase a business, they looked for a business that would help women look and feel better about themselves. Having raised five daughters, they knew how important it is for women to have strong minds and bodies. Their search for such a business ended when the Giarritta's purchased the Curves franchise on El Camino in Palo Alto in April 2005. Since then, the Giarritta's have enjoyed helping their members achieve higher levels of health and fitness in a positive and enjoyable setting. About 25 percent of their members are from Barron Park, making it a great place for neighbors to get to know each other.

The Giarritta's were drawn to the concept of Curves: A complete cardio and strength training workout that can be completed in just 30 minutes. Jennifer knew first-hand the time constraints busy moms face, and found that the 30-minute work-out was easy to commit to. In addition, the resistance-based machines work every major muscle group, with the added benefit of burning up to 500 calories every time. She liked the idea that work-outs could be fast, easy, effective and also fun.

"Our members range from 14 to 88 years old. They enjoy the lively music, lots of fun social conversation and our wonderful trainers," said Jennifer. "Not only does the club help women achieve fitness goals and good health, and prevent diseases, the

members themselves are also a positive influence in their own community."

Curves not only helps its members, it plays a vital role in the community. The club and its members donate to vari-

ous organizations, such as Juana Briones and Barron Park schools, the Palo Alto Community Child Care, the Veterans Administration Hospital, South Palo Alto Food Bank, Second Harvest Food Bank, Susan G. Komen Foundation, Soles for Souls, Battered Women's Network, and Stanford Blood Bank. This past May, Curves helped sponsor the Barron Park May Fete. You may have seen them passing out free boxes of Curves Cereal and holding a raffle for free month-long memberships.

Curves is not just about fun. Curves gets results, too. The Giarritta's employ Curves trainers to teach and motivate members. All the personal trainers are CPR/AED certified and genuinely care for the members. Michelle has been with the club since day one, and gets the ladies day started with a daily dose of kindness. Monica works mid-day with a highly social senior group. Elizabeth is high energy for the evening ladies. France keeps them coming in on Saturdays. The trainers make Curves feel more like a home than a fitness club.

Another way members stay motivated is by using "CurvesSmart," a state-of-the-art personal coaching system that has been incorporated into the 30-minute circuit workout. Every piece of equipment in the circuit is programmed with a member's information to give

moment-by-moment feedback. CurvesSmart also automatically adjusts to the individual's endurance level so that one's potential can be reached on every machine, during every workout. CurvesSmart automatically computes all the workout data to produce detailed progress reports that show overall muscle strength, calories burned and how close one is to reaching her goals.

Prices are competitive and affordable. Some companies and private health insurances even pay for memberships, recognizing the need for preventative and proactive approach to health.

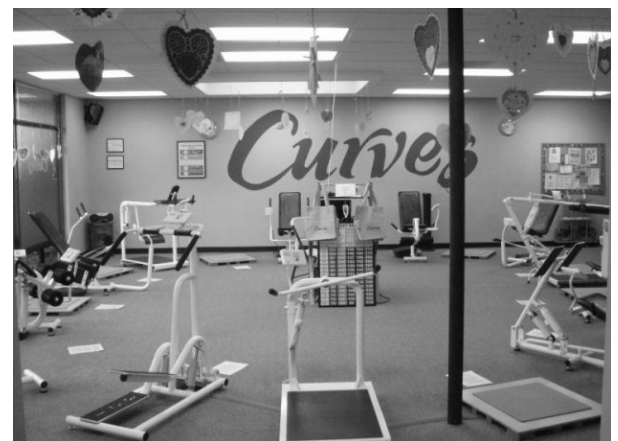
David and Jennifer would like to invite you to come meet your Barron Park neighbors, and try Curves out for two weeks FREE.

The annual Curves Food Drive started March 9: Bring in a bag of groceries and pay no service fee. Please mention this article when you call or come in.

Note: According to a top Consumer Rating magazine, this Curves location was the only one that had Top Ratings for Superior Quality in Fitness Clubs in the Bay Area.

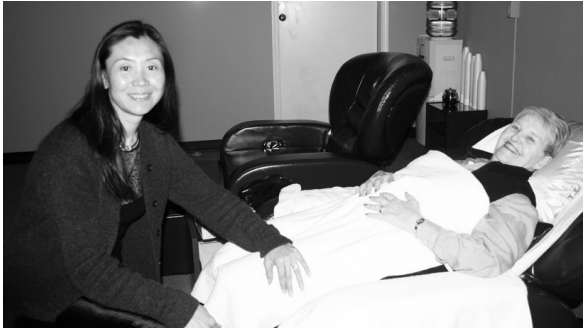
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[paloaltocurves@aol.com](mailto:paloaltocurves@aol.com), [www.curves.com](http://www.curves.com)

Hours: Mon.–Fri. 6:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., 3:30 to 7:00 p.m.; Saturday: 7:30 a.m. to Noon; Sunday: Closed



# Happy Feet Foot Spa: Full Body & Mind Relaxation in Barron Park

By Shirley Finrock



Left: owner Ping Bertelsen with Shirley Finrock

Nancy Hamilton, editor of this newsletter, and I recently treated ourselves to a wonderful massage at the new Happy Feet Foot Spa.

At our appointed time we entered the spacious dimly lit spa filled with soft music and softer voices. Fully clothed men and women, in obviously relaxed states of bliss were receiving massage in a few of the available 15 richly upholstered custom-made reclining chairs. One wall includes a large flat-panel television with no sound, just images of beautiful nature scenes [for those who need to focus on something]. Occasionally this peacefulness is emphasized by a soft snore.

Nancy was surprised that Happy Feet Foot Spa includes some full-body massage (head, shoulders, and back). She thought it was just for feet.

I first discovered the art of foot and leg massage in China, several years ago. I finally found a Spa on outer Geary Blvd. in



Lucy massaging a man's foot

San Francisco in 2007. Their price was higher, it took me an hour to go and come, and I had the hassle of finding a parking space on the San Francisco streets. When I found Happy Feet, it is one-third the cost of my excursion to the city, and only 5 minutes from my home in Barron Park.

Ping Bertelsen and her husband, David Bertelsen, own the Spa. David is a Physician Assistant, General Surgery at the Camino Medical Group facility of Palo Alto

Medical Foundation in Mountain View. They opened this spa in the summer of 2008, and have on staff six full-time Chinese masseurs/masseuses and two part-time ones.

We wanted to share our experience with you and let you know it's a great way to get rid of stress and nurture your mind and your body in a very relaxing environment at a very, very reasonable price. One hour is \$25 plus a mandatory tip of \$5.

My masseuse was Anna, and Daniel was assigned to Nancy. We were invited to take off our shoes and roll our slacks to knee height. A pillow was placed behind our backs, and our chair backs lowered to a comfortable position. We then soaked our feet and ankles for 15-20 minutes in large wooden tubs, lined with plastic bags filled with hot water and other good things.

The masseurs massaged our heads, neck and shoulders for about 15 minutes, then each arm for a few minutes more. Our feet were removed from the hot water then dried and wrapped in fluffy towels. Each foot and leg was massaged for about 15 minutes with body lotion, with attention directed at the pressure points of the foot, toes, and ankles. After wiping off any excess body lotion, hot steamy towels on each leg completed the foot and leg portion of the massage.

We then lay on our stomachs to have another 15 to 20 minutes neck, shoulder, and back massage. Ah...

Cups of water were provided, and assistance given to acclimate us back to the outside world after an hour of massage. All this for \$30! What a bargain for such plea-



Daniel working on Nancy's foot

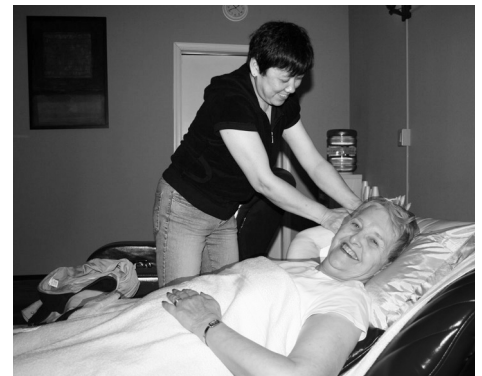
sure. You pay Ping at her front desk at the end of your visit, tip either the masseuse or deposit with Ping and probably make an appointment for your next visit.

Happy Feet Foot Spa is located at 3731 El Camino Real, between the Russian Grocery Store and the Dental Care office located between Barron Avenue and Military Way on the East side of the street.

They are open 7 days a week from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Ping is on site most of the time to make appointments, greet clients and insure that you are pampered during your stay. It is best to call ahead for an appointment, but walk-ins can usually be accommodated. (650) 565-8855, or (650) 388-8601.

<http://www.happyfeetfootspa.com>

So be kind to your body and support a new business that really serves our Barron Park neighborhood.

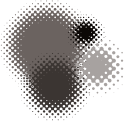


Anna with Shirley Finrock

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