

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Markus Fromherz, BPA President



Palo Alto Online recently published an article about the College Terrace neighborhood association that rang familiar: an organiza-

tion that has been around for about four decades and which played an important role for many residents over the years has difficulty attracting new blood to its board and may be at risk of folding. As BPA newsletter readers know, the lack of new volunteers is something the BPA board has been grappling with as well over recent years.

Why is it so difficult to find more volunteers to organize events, watch out for neighborhood safety, interact with the city and developers, or publish this newsletter? As our survey last year showed, it is not that residents don't care about these issues. Quite the opposite is true: throngs of people come together for the May Fete and Movie in the Park, concerned residents attend city council meetings, and the newsletter consistently gets very high marks. The Barron Park community clearly values what the BPA has to offer. More than that, and more broadly, community gatherings, activism, and communication demonstrably lead to a more enjoyable, livable, and resilient community.

So why aren't more folks stepping up to contribute? In the past, people joined the BPA board mainly for one of two reasons: either to simply contribute to the community they live in, or to get the BPA behind a specific cause they cared about (e.g., CPI). One obvious answer why there are fewer of the former is that people have less time to volunteer, both because more people work (and work longer hours) and because there are many more competing activities to choose from than decades ago. The latter—activists—still exist, but it's easier than ever to voice your opinion or rally people using online tools and social media. While the BPA may provide more weight to an opinion, it also takes longer to act and has to be more considerate by its very nature (serving a large and diverse membership).

You may think of other reasons why fewer people make themselves available to the community. The effect is the same, though: most current board members have been in their roles for a long time, and new members are hard to recruit. As a result, several important committee chairs are vacant. Rather than just lament this situation, though, the board has been active to work out a "Plan B": considering the outsourcing

of some of its activities. For example, the fact that events bring neighbors together and thus lead to a vibrant and resilient community is not necessarily diminished by having events organized by professional event planners. While most of us would prefer to have volunteers from the neighborhood organize our events, it is more important to continue those events than to insist on free labor. This has in fact happened to the May Fete: our marquee event has become just too much for a volunteer group to organize, but by all accounts paying a professional to plan and run it for the last few years has done nothing to decrease its popularity. So that is what we are considering for other offerings from the BPA. We have some creative ideas, and I think some may change the BPA for the better. We'll do it carefully, and certainly not for everything. We'll also have to look at the financial impact, and perhaps we'll have to raise membership dues (which haven't changed in many years). None of this is decided yet, but this is the time to think about it. We are fortunate to have a solid organization with a strong history, which provides a good foundation for its next phase.

We'd like to hear your opinion on this issue. Send me an email at president@BPApaloalto.org or post a comment when this column gets published on our website. We know that the BPA is a valued institution for many, but we can't stand still if we want to remain relevant.

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Status of Bol Park Restoration Project

By Shirley Finrock

The CA Native plot at the intersection of Matadero and Laguna Avenue is looking particularly nice this spring. Despite the drought, most plants are thriving due to the heavy rain in December.

Thanks to a recent donation from a Barron Park family, new mulch was placed on the paths, winter pruning was accomplished and spring weeds were eliminated. If residents in our Barron Park neighborhood are enjoying the visual improvement of the restored native habitat and ecosystem in the Open Space area of Bol Park, it would be appropriate to make a tax-deductible donation for continuing heavy maintenance. A tax-deductible donation can be made through the

Friends of the Palo Alto Parks, a 401c non-profit organization. Payee: *Friends of the Palo Alto Parks* and designate: *Bol Park Corner Restoration Project*. Mail to: FOPAP, Suite 27, 425 Grant Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306



Bol Park Native Habitat Improvement Project

Palo Alto's City Parks range from very urban—a lawn, a few trees and some playground equipment—to acres of natural lands like Arastradero, Foothill and the Baylands. All of our city parks have some potential as habitat for local wildlife, but Bol Park with its lovely Matadero Creek and remnant oak woodland has the potential to be home for lots of wildlife like Western Bluebirds, Pacific Chorus Frogs,

and native fish like stickleback.

Unfortunately, Bol Park also has non-native, invasive vegetation that reduces the habitat value of the park. These invasive plants like Periwinkle, Algerian Ivy and Cotoneaster did not co-evolve with our local wildlife. A close look at the leaves of these plants shows that no one is eating them! On the other hand, native vegetation is usually well nibbled by a wide variety

of insects that move the energy from the plants into frogs, birds and other wildlife.

Thanks to a grant from the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the local non-profit Acterra began propagating local native plants for the park and organizing local volunteers to weed and plant native plants to improve the creek-side ecosystem of Bol park.

Three years ago, weeding and planting began with lots of help from the Barron Park Green Team. Work was done along the bank of the creek near the stairway and also in three small areas

of grassland and oak woodland along the earthen path that provides a short cut over toward the donkeys.

February 19th of this year, Acterra organized another volunteer workday to weed and install additional plants in these areas. About 15 volunteers planted over 100 new native plants of about a dozen different species, including currants, soap plant, bunch grasses, and Slender Milkweed.

A long-time Barron Park resident remembered riding the train that followed the current bike path and disembarking near Bol Park in an area full of milkweed and Monarchs Butterflies. This story inspired neighbors to plant milkweed off the bike path near the donkeys, and now 20 new milkweed plants have been planted in the grassland area of the park.

Milkweed is perennial, but only below ground so it is barely visible now, but with luck and some rain, we may see Monarchs laying their eggs on these plants this spring! If you are interested in learning more about the restoration project or volunteering to help in the future, please contact Claire Elliott at clairee@acterra.org.



Volunteers planting milkweed in the Bol Park grassland in February of this year.

BARRON PARK SENIORS

By Mary Jane Leon



There were 26 of us who got together for a good lunch at Da Sichuan in February—they always give us plentiful, tasty food and excellent service.

No pictures from that lunch, but we got some at our annual Holiday lunch in December at Cibo. They always give us a private room, good menu selections, and we always have some holiday music—this last December, our neighbors Gary Breitbart and Jena Rauti played and sang for and with us. They even provided handouts with the words to a wealth of songs, and we sang with gusto.

As you can see in the accompanying photo, we are all reading the song sheets that Gary B generously provided.

Are you recently retired, and ready to get to know a few more of your neighbors? We are a sociable group, getting together for

Help Support the Barron Park Donkeys!



Photo by Bernard Andre

All those who care about Perry and Niner seek to guarantee their proper on-going care and shelter, as well as to ensure that funds 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 Sustain-

able 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 Steven Parkes (650) 918-6768 or email at smparkes@smparkes.net, or go to BarronParkDonkeys.org.



lunches, helping out with neighborhood events, making cookies for the Annual Meeting and the Christmas Party.

We are just now planning our next lunch-time get-together. If you would like to join us, please email or phone Julie at 493-9151 or juliespengler@sbcglobal.net. We would like to get to know you.

EMAIL LISTS

The BPA has four email lists: bpa-news, bpa-issues, bpa-misc and bpa-jobpostings. They are hosted at Google Groups. To join, go to the BPA Website: BPAlpaloalto.org and click on the tab "BPA Email Lists." This provides an easy means to subscribe, and information about the lists.

THE BUENA VISTA AT BARRON PARK

Eighty-Seven Years at 3980 El Camino Real

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

What's in a Name?

In Barron Park, we often refer to "The Trailer Park" to describe the community that exists near the corner of Los Robles Avenue and El Camino Real. A sign at the entrance on El Camino says "Buena Vista Mobile Home Park." This may sound more dignified than "trailer park," but it is less descriptive of the reality, since most of the homes in the community are set on foundations—not always adequate—and haven't been moved since they were originally installed there. I prefer the name on the sign at the driveway entrance on Los Robles, which is shorter and less misleading. It simply reads "Buena Vista Park."

For the purposes of this brief history, I will call it "the Buena Vista." When it was first established, our neighborhood barely existed. There were glimpses of the Santa Cruz Mountains to the south and west between the spreading live oaks scattered on the lands that had been Mayfield Farm and then the Barron Estate. The East Bay Hills could also be seen to the East. Buena Vista—"good view"—was an appropriate name for the place.

Attitudes

I suspect that many residents of the single-family middle-class suburban homes that make up the majority of the housing in Barron Park have been, at least in the recent past, uncomfortable with the idea—and the reality—of a "trailer park" at the main entrance to the neighborhood that we love and take pride in. The idea of a trailer park

seems inconsistent with our favored image of Palo Alto as a town of highly educated, wealthy or well-to-do people with "professional" jobs and high incomes. "Trailer park" conveys images of poorly educated "white trash" people with drinking or drug problems, prone to unstable marriages and violent altercations. It has been difficult for some people to accept the reality that this "trailer park" could be quite different from the popular concept.

Realities

The facts of the matter are quite different. Many of the people at the Buena Vista are living here because they want their children to have the advantages of a Palo Alto public education and to be able to become candidates for those "professional-level" jobs that most Palo Alto children aspire to. The park is a quiet neighborhood - not a hotbed of crime, drugs or dissolute living. This has been true for many years now - maybe it was always true. It is difficult now to know what life was like in the Buena Vista in the 1920s or 1940s, or even the 1960s. However, a fair amount is known about the place, and I will try to piece the story together for you from the scraps of information that have been preserved.

In the Beginning...

The beginning was in 1919 when the Barron Estate Company sold "Mayfield Farm," 350 acres of beautifully wooded pasture lands and orchards along the State Highway south of the town of Mayfield. It was sold to Driscoll and Reiter, strawberry growers

and packers from Watsonville, for almost \$200,000—a significant sum in those days. Driscoll and Reiter began subdividing and selling off 2-5 acre parcels for strawberry cultivation. They sold mostly to families who meant to build small houses and cultivate the berries as additional income. Most of the men were probably employed as senior blue-collar workers in Mayfield, Palo Alto, and other nearby towns.

A Problem Parcel

Driscoll and Reiter had a problem selling the "Barron Mansion" and its surrounding 50-acre park planted with ornamental vegetation, winding driveways and outbuildings. The mansion was a towering 62-year-old three-story "wedding cake" Victorian, with at least 26 rooms, many with 14-foot ceilings. They finally found a willing buyer for the mansion and 30 acres in 1923: Colonel Sebastian Jones, who was looking for a suitable property to establish a boys' boarding school.

Jones Sold Off Extra Land

Colonel Jones built his school, The California Military Academy, and opened it in 1924. Part of his plan was to finance part of the construction costs by selling off any extra land that wasn't needed for the academy. He started doing this in 1925, when he platted a subdivision of tiny residential and commercial lots along the highway and three side streets, which he named Barron Park. More to the point of this particular story, Jones sold 5.392 acres on the corner of the State Highway (now El Camino Real) to R. E. Ashley, probably in 1925. The parcel is shown on a 1926 map of the Barron Park vicinity. (See Photo A)

Ashley's Parcel—Then and Now

Ashley's parcel had approximately 330 feet of frontage on the highway and was about 660 feet deep along Los Robles Avenue, which may not have been paved yet. The land was live oak woodland—great old oaks scattered in grassland. Over the years, this parcel became known as the Buena Vista Properties. They include the Buena Vista Park, Jim Davis's Valero service station, and the strip mall currently occupied by the Immersion spa, Baja Fresh, Java Juice and an education business (tutoring services). The street addresses now are 3972

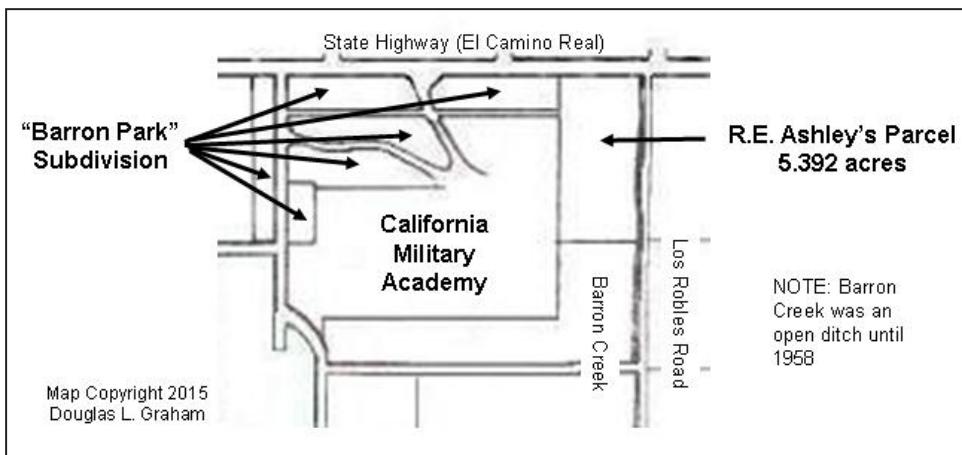


Photo A: 1926 Parcel Map of Barron Park vicinity.



Photo B: The Buena Vista Auto Camp and Richfield Station in 1929. Tiny bedroom units, about the size of today's dumpsters, with spaces between to pull your car in. Weiler family photo.



Photo C: Unidentified Man at Beacon gasoline station—early 1930s. This man is probably Fran Weiler. Weiler family photo.



Photo E: Automobiles under oak tree shade, probably early 1930s, based on car designs. Weiler family photo.

(gas station), 3980 (Buena Vista Park) and 3990 (strip mall), even though the land is, legally speaking, one undivided parcel. The zoning is split into CN (Neighborhood Commercial) for the gas station and strip mall, and RM-15 (Residential Multiple—lowest density RM category).

The First Auto Camp, Lunch Room and Service Station

By 1928, perhaps as early as 1925, Ashley built an "auto camp" on his parcel (auto

camps were the forerunners of motels). One sign, photographed in 1929, already called it a motel. However, he advertised the "Buena Vista Auto Camp" in the 1930 Palo Alto City Directory. The ad included a photograph showing a row of tiny wooden cabins, apparently built on raised platforms, with narrow spaces between them which were probably intended for car parking (See Photo B). Ashley advertised "Camp Sites, Cabins, Store, Lunch Room, Gas and Oils, Hot and Cold Showers."

The gas station sold Richfield gasoline. Later during the 1930s it was a Beacon Station (See Photo C). Joe Weiler, in an oral history, said that "We were the first service station between Palo Alto and Mountain View when we took the property over" (in 1932).



Photo D: Buena Vista Café, 1929. Weiler family photo.

The Buena Vista Cafe

The "Lunch Room" advertised by Ashley apparently was the Buena Vista Café, located approximately where the Immersion spa is now. According to Joe Weiler, it was the first place to open between Palo Alto and Mountain View where you could pull off the highway and have a sandwich. At that time, U.S. Highway 101 was the interstate route between Oregon and San Diego, and the 2-lane highway ran right down El Camino Real. In 1929, the restaurant's sign read "BUENA VISTA—Sandwiches, Groceries, Coffee, Cigars, Candy, and Soft Drinks" (See Photo D). By 1930 the sign was changed to read "BUENA VISTA—LUNCH."



Photo F: Joe Weiler (1977). Photo by Ann Knopf.

A Beautiful Oak Grove

The ad also noted that the auto camp was "Near Palo Alto and Stanford University, One Mile South of Mayfield on Main Highway" and was located in a "Beautiful Oak Grove." The

shaded parking provided by the oaks was probably a significant selling point—a late 1930s-vintage photograph shows automobiles clustered tightly around the huge tree trunks (See Photo E). Contemporary photographs from 1929 and the 1930s show at least four big oaks, and a later aerial photograph (1941) shows six large oaks on the property, two of them giants. There were more large oaks next door on the military academy grounds. There were also large oaks southwest along both sides of Los Robles Road, and directly across Los Robles where Rudolfo's (the Axe House) was built later (where the Montague Apartments complex is now).



Photo G: Woman relaxing by trailer, probably late 1930s. Weiler family photo.

The Weiler Family Takes Over

Fran Weiler purchased the property in 1932 and moved his family in. The unidentified man at the Beacon Station in Photo C may be Fran Weiler. Ann Knopf of Barron Park took an oral history in 1977 from Fran's son Joe Weiler, who grew up and eventually took over the property (See Photo F).

The "Chat & Chew"

The cafe had been renamed and the sign on the building now read "Chat & Chew." It was run by Mr. & Mrs. Warnig (sic). According to Joe Weiler, it served some

sandwiches but was mainly a doughnut and coffee shop. "There were 16 varieties of doughnuts, including cinnamon and a "pretzel" doughnut with four or five fingers on it. They were 35 cents a dozen. Coffee and a doughnut cost a dime—that was a pretty good price in those days." The restaurant had a large sign, oriented perpendicularly to the highway that read "CHAT & CHEW – Cafe – BEARCLAWS 19 Cents – WE FEATURE ICE CREAM – MILK SHAKES – SUNDAES – FOUNTAIN SERVICE"

The War Years

A photograph, possibly taken during the war years, shows a woman relaxing next to her travel trailer in the shade of a great live oak tree (See Photo G)

Mr. and Mrs. Lemon operated the Chat & Chew during the war, and served more food with less emphasis on doughnuts. Later on, Mr. and Mrs. Dillon offered regular meals; a merchant's luncheon, dinners and everything, and doughnuts were downplayed.

A Chat and Chew matchbook cover survives from this period. The front says "Open all night," "Chat & Chew," "DoNuts," and "U.S. Highway 101—2 miles south of Palo Alto." The back advertises "Breakfasts, short orders, waffles, sandwiches, and milk-shakes." "Enjoy our delicious DO-NUTS (take some home) MANY VARIETIES" (See Photo H).



Photo H: Chat & Chew matchbook cover. In the 1940s and 50s, most adults smoked cigarettes, often two packs a day. Most restaurants provided free matchbooks of paper matches, with their logos and ads. For places like Chat & Chew, their matchbook covers may have been their main advertising. Collecting unused matchbooks was a popular hobby, like stamp collecting. Note: the Chat & Chew was open all night. El Camino Real was still U.S. Highway 101 (business alternate) until the late 1950s.

The Decision to Set Up a Trailer Park

During World War II, the Weilers provided primitive hookups for trailers, housing war workers and people associated with the army camp on Page Mill Road or with Moffett Field. Joe said "We had a lot of (army) people staying with us...a lot of these people had trailers, and they would pull in here, into the (open) area...it was ideal, so my Dad would set a meter up, maybe hang it on a tree or on a post or something, and so they would have electricity. We weren't on the sewer then, and they didn't have toilets in the trailers. So we had outside restrooms. But, that was in the infancy of the trailer business, really, and then we decided that this looked like something that was a new thing coming in and we could utilize most of our land, so we went ahead and decided that we would set up a trailer park."

Moving the Cottages Out

Joe said that, to make room for the trailer park, they had to move the auto court cottages off the property. "Lawrence Anderson, the house mover, moved all of those down to the Mountain View area. They could move them to any place, if they had an acre or more of land, I think, in those days...without special permits (or) anything. I don't know what they paid for the buildings...but it was a very nominal fee. We might have got a hundred dollars or something for each...Anderson would block



Photo I: Buena Vista Motel units, late 1940s. Weiler family photo.



Photo J: Buena Vista Trailer Park, late 1940s. Weiler family photo.



Photo K: Undergrounding Barron Creek near the driveway entrance—looking West along Los Robles Avenue. Weiler family photo.



Photo L: All American Market, 1985. Photo by Hazel Rand.

them up and down the road they would go! This took place right after World War II.” (The war ended in the summer of 1945).

The Motel

The tiny auto camp cabins, originally built in the 1920s, were replaced with a “modern” strip motel with units separated by carports (See Photo I). The name was upgraded to “auto court.” Usually each unit had its own bathroom, another improvement over the “auto camp,” which had a centrally located building with shower rooms and toilets.

There is one photo of the Buena Vista Trailer Park from the late 1940s (judging by automobile styles), and in it, the trailer park is beginning to look more like it does today. The trailers were much larger, and some of them may have become fixed in place (See Photo J).

A 1948 aerial photograph shows the motel units. The Chat & Chew Building was still in place. El Camino Real was still U.S. Highway 101 (business alternate) until the late 1950s, even after the Bayshore High-

way “cutoff” (not yet a freeway) was built. An aerial photograph is available from 1955, and it appears that the motel units were still there. The Chat & Chew building was also still there. However, at least two of the large oaks had gone.

Flooding in the 1950s

When R. E. Ashley bought the parcel in 1925, Barron Creek ran in an open ditch down the north side of Los Robles Road and went under El Camino in a very large concrete culvert. The creek was subject to flash flooding whenever its small watershed was hit by an intense rain cell (two or more inches of rain in a few hours). California was generally wracked with prolonged wet periods and widespread major flooding all during the late 1950s and very early 1960s. Between Laguna Avenue and the Buena Vista parcel, many Los Robles Avenue homeowners had built private bridges for their driveways. These were wooden structures and some were quite flimsy and getting rickety with age. In the “Flood of the Century” in December, 1955, several of these bridges came loose and

caused major debris dams at other bridges, and at the concrete bridge on La Donna Avenue. As a result, Barron Creek spilled onto the streets and flooded a major part of Barron Park. Although I do not have any written evidence, I firmly believe that the Buena Vista Auto Camp must have been flooded on that occasion, and perhaps even in lesser floods.

The County flood control agency (a precursor of the current Santa Clara Valley Water District) undertook to protect the area from future flooding by putting Barron Creek into a five-foot diameter concrete pipe running from Laguna Avenue to El Camino Real (See Photo K). This was installed in the summer of 1958, the bridges were history, and probably the Buena Vista did not suffer flooding after that.

The Trailers Become Permanent in the 1960s

By the 1960s most of the trailers were no longer mobile, and were occupied by long-term owners or renters, as is true now. A 1966 aerial photo shows that the motel unit was still there. However, the Chat & Chew café building had been moved out of the area, and replaced with a grocery store, the All American Market, in a new, larger building,

The All American Market Opens

The All American was a full-service market with about 10,000 square feet of space (see Illustration L). It was a member of a small chain, with the other stores in Los Altos, Palo Alto, Menlo Park and several more nearby locations. It had a good produce section and a small butcher shop. With its inexpensive wine section, the All American took some business away from the neighborhood liquor stores on El Camino Real at Military Way.

Close Relations Existed Between Park and Store

By the early 1980s the long-term renters had become a core customer base for the All American. The clerks knew nearly everyone in the Buena Vista, most of them by sight, many by name and some by mutual friendship. One Barron Park resident, knowing I was writing this story, told me that she remembered how All American clerks would deliver grocery orders to elderly Buena Vista residents who were having difficulty getting out to the store.

I remember one popular clerk, who worked at the All American for more than ten years: “Young Carl” Jamrog (so-called to distinguish him from “Big Carl”). “Young Carl” lived in the Buena Vista, was a personable and dynamic young man, and was elected



Photo M: Buena Vista Park entrance (1985). Photo by Hazel Rand.

President of the residents' association about 1990. He represented the residents' interests to the Buena Vista Park's owners for at least several years. Joe Weiler gave him prints of the Buena Vista for a scrapbook that Carl made for the association. Carl let me copy these later in the 1990s, which is why we have these interesting photos to enjoy today.

The Park's Appearance

In the 1980s, The Buena Vista began to take on its current appearance, as the long-term renters, many of whom had bought their trailers, built little yards and gardens around the "mobile" homes. Barron Park resident Hazel Rand photographed all the properties on our El Camino strip in the summer of 1985. Both Photos L (the market) and M (the Buena Vista Park entrance) were taken by Hazel.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association
724 Barron Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94306

EDITOR

Nancy "Jo" Hamilton

DESIGNER

Patrick Coyne

PROOFREADERS

Bob Cook, Gwen Luce

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Elder, Shirley Finrock, Markus Fromherz, Douglas L. Graham, Patti Kahn, Mary Jane Leon, Linnie Melena, Bob Moss

Problems at the All American Market

Change came to the Buena Vista when the Weiler family sold the property (Trailer Park, Market and Gas Station) to the present owner, Joe Jisser, in the early 1980s. Soon after the sale, Mr. Jisser began pressuring the market management to improve profits. This proved difficult to do, since the grocery business was (and still is) very competitive and chains like Safeway were beginning to build "super-stores," presaging the gigantic chain stores of today. More and more residents of Barron Park were patronizing the super-stores for their large range of choices and lower prices. "Small" ten-thousand-square-foot stores like the All American were being hit hard.

The All American Gets the Axe

In 1998, the axe fell. The All American Market closed after Mr. Jisser cancelled its lease. It had been a successful business for about forty years. Shortly after the market closed, the building was thoroughly renovated, divided and reopened with four businesses; Blockbuster video rentals, Baja Fresh (Mexican Fast Food), Jamba Juice, and Right Start (an infant wear boutique).

Many Barron Park residents questioned the necessity for the market closure and lobbied the city for help. However, others who had seldom or never patronized the All American, felt "good riddance." I do not have any record of how the residents of the Buena Vista Park felt, but I cannot imagine that they were happy about the closure.

The Gas Station Keeps Pumpin' Away

The gas station experienced new business ownership and brand changes several

times over the years. It has been a Beacon outlet at least twice, Texaco twice, Richfield, Chevron and Valero once each (that I know about). The current owner, Jim Davis, recently celebrated 25 years in business in 2012 and he has changed brands at least twice.

Blockbuster was very successful and appreciated highly by many Barron Park and Buena Vista Park residents during its nearly ten-year existence. However, it eventually fell victim to Netflix, Roku and other methods of delivering video disks or streaming video directly to the home market and closed in 2010. Its closing left the large space vacant for several years before Immersion spa moved in.

Buena Vista Park Faces an Uncertain Future

I know that most of the readers of this article have been reading the stories about Mr. Jisser's attempts to sell the Buena Vista properties to real estate developers for a large housing project, and the reactions of the residents and their Barron Park neighbors. We are all interested to see what effects the recent moves made by County and City elected officials may have on the negotiations. I did not intend to cover history since 2010, nor take any position on the issues in this article.

I hope you have enjoyed these brief glimpses of the background history of the property. If you have questions to ask, or corrections, or additional information to offer, please contact me at Douglas L. Graham. 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto CA 94306, dgrahampaca@gmail.com, or 650-493-0689.

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BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

Annual Membership for April 2015 – March 2016



New Member



Renewal

Members receive our BPA quarterly newsletter and access to the BPA Babysitting List. Your membership also supports BPA sponsored social events, the BPApaloalto.org website, committee activities, and the BPA email lists (**see below**).

Membership is for one year, April 2015 – March 2016

☐ **I want to receive newsletter
online instead of a mailed copy**

Please write clearly

Name(s):	Primary Email:
	Alternate Email:
Street Address:	Cell Phone: Home Phone:

...or join online at <http://www.BPApaloalto.org> and click on

How to Join

Please select a Membership Category (per household)

☐ Fellow \$100

☐ Patron \$ 50

☐ Sponsor \$ 35

☐ Additional Contribution: _____

☐ Member \$20

☐ Senior (65+) \$10

☐ Business \$50

Total Enclosed: _____

Make check payable to: Barron Park Association
Membership and contributions are not tax deductible

We invite you to volunteer for BPA committees or activities to improve our neighborhood.

See the reverse for descriptions and sign up boxes. Please check those you can help with! If you would like to lead one of these committees, contact the BPA President at president@BPApaloalto.org

Please mail this completed form & your check by **APRIL 30** to:

**Barron Park Association
724 Barron Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94306**

The donkeys and their care are supported by voluntary contributions to a separate organization. Write your checks to: **ACTERRA- Palo Alto Donkey Fund** and mail them to:



**The Palo Alto Donkey Project
ACTERRA**

3921 E. Bayshore Rd.,
Palo Alto, CA 94303.

BPA Email Lists: Sign up for ***BPA-misc, BPA-issues, BPA-news and Notices***

➤ Go to <http://www.BPApaloalto.org> and click on

BPA Email Lists

See Reverse to sign up for:

BPA Babysitting List • BPA Neighborhood Committees

BPA Babysitting List:

The BPA provides a list of those available for babysitting. **See important note below*** A new list is compiled each year, so complete this section, even if you signed up last year. The list is distributed to BPA members by email only, so please be sure to complete your email address above.

☐ I would like to receive the list.

☐ I would like to be included on the list of baby sitters.

My name is _____

Age (if under 21) _____ Contact info _____

***By signing up for this service, parents, babysitters and their families acknowledge that the Barron Park Association is not responsible for, and will be held harmless against, any injury, loss, claim, lawsuit, or other damage arising from, or related in any manner to the parent's and babysitter's use of this resource list or the individuals appearing on it.**

BPA Neighborhood Committees: Volunteers are the key to a vibrant community!

☐ **Newsletter**

Contribute photos, articles, interview Barron Park neighbors/businesses for articles, asst. editor, proofreader

☐ **May Fete**

Help with the annual spring neighborhood party in Bol Park.

☐ **Social/Cultural Events**

Organize group of volunteers, coordinate neighborhood events, assist with planning

☐ **Welcoming**

Greet new residents with an informational packet to introduce them to our caring community.

☐ **Parks and Creeks**

Work with City, the Santa Clara Valley Water District and neighborhood to review park and creek issues, maintenance needs, and improvement projects.

☐ **Seniors**

Join us for lunch or serve as a volunteer to help other Barron Park Seniors.

☐ **Neighborhood Safety and Emergency Preparedness**

Work with the Emergency Preparedness Chairperson to prepare the neighborhood to handle major emergencies on a block-by-block basis.

☐ **Traffic and Streets**

Work with City and neighborhood to review traffic issues, evaluate options, and present plans to the City for traffic calming and other safety-related changes within Barron Park and on adjacent major streets.

☐ **Environmental Issues**

Work on a specific neighborhood environmental issue or identify, create and implement sustainable environmental solutions in our neighborhood.

☐ **Zoning and Land Use**

Be informed about urban design studies or multi-family, commercial, or mixed use developments proposed in our neighborhood -- attend meetings to review project plans and provide input to project sponsors.

☐ **School Liaison**

Coordinate BPA affairs and news with neighborhood school issues and activities

☐ **Willing to help out with one-time activity**

What happens when I reply to BPA email lists?

By Richard Elder

Most Barron Park residents are familiar with the three BPA-sponsored email lists: *BPA-news*, *BPA-misc*, and *BPA-issues*. If you are new to the neighborhood, more information about the lists and how to subscribe can be found on the BPA website at: <http://www.bpapaloalto.org/bpa-email-lists/>.

Even long-time users can be confused about how replies to these lists work, so here is a brief primer.

BPA-news is meant for announcements, so there is generally no reason to reply. In the event that you do want to contact the sender, the group is configured so that if you hit the "reply" button, your email will be addressed only to the originator.

BPA-misc is configured the same way, so that replies only go to the sender of the message. This group is intended for requests such as service recommendations, offers of unneeded items or yard sales, etc. In general one's response is only of interest to the original requestor. In the case of service recommendation requests, it is often helpful for the original requestor to follow up with a summary. For instance, if you request recommendations for a tree trimmer, you may get 5 recommendations and end up choosing one. Sending a follow up email with a list of the recommendations and your experience with the one you chose makes that information available to everyone.

BPA-issues is a list devoted to discussion of issues related to Barron Park. This group is configured so that hitting the "reply" button addresses the email to the entire group. This makes sure that everyone on the list is involved by avoiding any accidental side discussions. It does mean that traffic on this list can be very high when there is a controversial issue afloat.

If you have more questions about the BPA email lists, I can be reached at *listmanager* at *bpapaloalto dot org*.

El Camino Business Update, February 2015

By Bob Moss

There continue to be changes in occupancy on El Camino between Adobe Creek and Page Mill since my last report in August.

Mindflash at 2825 was replaced by Comcast/Xfinity that had an opening with Jerry Rice as an attraction Feb. 20.

The previously vacant space at 2875 now is occupied by Opus Advisors.

Comfort Keeper at 3229 was replaced by King Hand Acupuncture.

Audible Difference at 3337 has been replaced by Founder Institute.

Palo Alto Motor Inn at 3339 changed to Berbenda Place Motor Lodge.

Orthopedic Sports Medicine at 3401 is open. I incorrectly reported they had closed last May.

One of the Jewish Study Network offices at 3630 now is Inhabiture.

Fashion Cuts replaced Happy Feet Foot Spa last year at 3731. Recently they moved across the street to 3666D, replacing Average to Elite Performance.

Happy Feet Foot Spa moved from 3737 to the corner store at 3783.

Midas Muffler at 4000 El Camino closed last year, possibly hurt by the extensive construction next door on the new Hilton Gardens Inn that has been going on for over a year. That construction sometimes made access to Midas from El Camino tricky. American Tire filed an application to move into the Midas site in early December.

Roche at 4141C El Camino Way now is Roche & Eichner Psychology.

The retail stores at Meadow and El Camino Way that used to be anchored by Su Hong until they moved out more than four years ago was modified to Acme Child Care Center. This eliminated vacancies on El Camino Way.

Vacancy rates under 5% are considered essentially full occupancy.

There are only three vacancies on the Barron Park side totaling 12,000 sq. ft. They are the former Midas site at 4200, the former liquor store at 3866 and Chaletaco at 3850. Both the Midas site and 3850 have new tenants that should open before long. Papa Murphy Pizza has been actively working, even weekends, to modify the site at 3850, and should be ready to open soon. I didn't include the vacant lots at 3710 and 4146 (Thain) that have been vacant for decades, since each has had several developments approved, but nothing ever built. The property owners apparently want to hold them.

There may be seven vacancies on the Ventura Side. No occupants are shown for 3457 and 3527. The Combes lot at 3585 has been vacant for more than 40 years. 3731 now is vacant since Fashion Cuts moved across the street. The former Compadres site at 3877 was proposed for redevelopment as a mixed use site with ground floor retail and housing above and wrapping around the rear to Curtner. There were some problems with the application. The project isn't likely to be completed until 2016. A three-story mixed use project is being developed at 4073. They had an open house for the condo Feb. 21 so it should be occupied soon. The former Curves site at 4117 has been vacant for years.

The massive PC project proposed for 2785 El Camino at the VTA parking lot was put on hold as the Council now recognizes that the PC process isn't working and needs correction, so the site isn't likely to be developed soon. The Planning & Transportation Commission has had two study sessions on PCs and agreed that the process needs modifications, but specific changes to the ordinance are in flux.

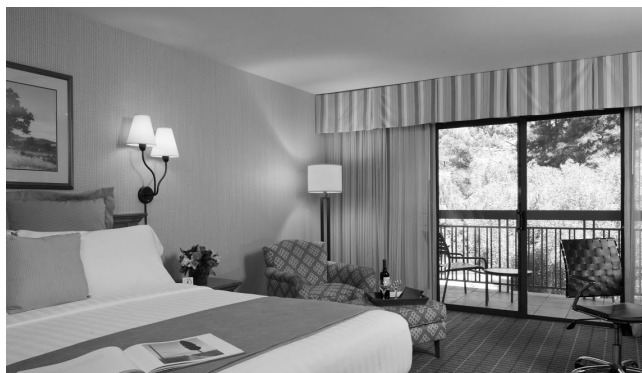
Vacancy rates	May 2014	Aug. 2014	Feb. 2015
El Camino on Ventura side	10.0%	10.0%	5.14%
El Camino on Barron Park side	0.97%	0.97%	2.88%
El Camino Way	17.39%	0.0%	0.0%
Total vacancy including El Camino Way	5.58%	4.56%	3.63%



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The Barron Park Association thanks the Creekside Inn for graciously providing rooms for several of our monthly meetings.

Barron Park Book Group

By Patti Kahn

On the first Wednesday evening of each month, a group of Barron Park residents enthusiastically gathers at the home of Janet Rulifson to drink tea and talk about that month's selected book.

Founded in September 2011 by Barron Park resident Carol Garsten, the group meets monthly to discuss books that range from recent bestsellers to classics to non-fiction. Books are suggested in advance by members and then chosen by popular vote. Usually, the monthly selections alternate between fiction and non-fiction.

Several current members have been in the group since its inception. Founder Garsten was unable to keep attending meetings; and at one point, the group dwindled. But Rulifson said she and two others were determined to keep the group going. "We vowed we would do it even if there were only two or three of us," she says. Gradually the group grew, and these days there are typically five to ten members at each meeting.

Members find many reasons to enjoy the monthly meetings. They like reading and discussing the books, and meeting neighbors they wouldn't otherwise meet. Many also note the group has helped them find books they might not know about otherwise. Founding member Verna Graham describes the group as being "casual, comfortable, and honest."

Longtime member Terry Andre says, "I joined at the very beginning because I love books, [and I] learn a lot from hearing other viewpoints." She adds, "What I like best about [the group] is meeting with everyone.... I also love learning about...titles [of] fantastic books from other members." Member Nancy Steinbach adds, "I joined because I wanted to get motivated to read more. If there's a book club, I'm much more likely to read." Rulifson says, "I...love talking about what I have read with others." She adds wryly, "I used to be limited to talking to myself."

Andre calculates that the group has read over 35 books since its founding. Non-fiction titles have included *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*, *The Unwinding*, and *West with the Night*. Favorite fiction selections have included *Cutting for Stone*, *A Tale for the Time Being*, *Stoner*, and *All the Light We Cannot See*. One of the group's earliest selections,

Major Pettigrew's Last Stand, particularly appealed to Graham; she described it as "mostly light reading and fun with no bombings, abject poverty, human slavery or war."

Not all the books have turned out to be popular, though. For several members, Hemmingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* was disappointing. Other books, such as *The Goldfinch*, were not necessarily well-liked, but they engendered thought-provoking discussions.

Meetings can be flexible. For example, when the group was scheduled to read *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*, Rulifson had just returned from a trip to India, where she consulted on education in a remote, poverty-stricken area. Another member mentioned a new documentary film about children working together to bring water to their neighborhood in the slums. So the group decided to devote one night to learning about what Rulifson observed during her trip, another to discussing the book itself, and a separate gathering to see the film. "It was a lot of fun," says Andre, "and we got a deeper understanding of the state of childhood in India."

When asked if anything about the book group was surprising, Rulifson replied, "I think the thing that I have found most gratifying is that, like me, most of us raised our families, started to work (or continued), and built fascinating lives and had wonderful experiences after children. Those were the years when I felt everyone else knew each other and I had vanished. I am excited every time I hear about someone else's experiences. I am also dazzled by the knowledge and intellect of all the members."

Steinbach echoes her sentiment. "Best of all are the many interesting people who are in this group," she says. Sharon Erickson, who joined the group about a year ago, sums it up. "It's a well-read group...and always interesting. I've been attending ever since [my first meeting], and now would find the first Wednesday of the month rather dull if I didn't have the Barron Park book group to attend!"

New members are always welcome, even if you haven't read the book. To be added to the group's email list, contact Terry Andre at terryandre@earthlink.net.

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Traffic & Streets: vacant

Welcoming: Gwen Luce



BPA meetings are held the 3rd

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

E-mail President@BPAPaloalto.org

for location

www.BPAPaloalto.org

ARE YOU WASTING FOOD?

Information from City of Palo Alto Zero Waste edited by Lynnie Melena, Barron Park Green Team

Forty percent of all food in the US is wasted.

That is an amazing percentage, but it is a figure that is quoted by multiple sources, including the City of Palo Alto Zero Waste Program.

The City is embarking on a multi-pronged effort to reduce the amount of wasted food that goes into our garbage cans, including this education campaign to help us shrink our garbage footprint. Another component of the City's Zero Waste Program, to be considered by the City Council in the next few months, is a proposal to have homeowners and businesses separate their food waste for curbside collection. Another component, which many of us practice, is home composting. Zero Waste Palo Alto's mission is to help the community reach its goal of Zero Waste (no waste burned or buried) by 2021.

More facts:

- 25% of all the fresh water we consume goes to produce the food we never eat.
- 4% of the oil we consume goes to produce the food we never eat.
- \$166 billion (retail value of preventable waste) is spent on the food we never eat.
- 135 million tons of GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions is created by the food we never eat *

Food Waste Defined

Food is wasted when we buy more than we need, store it incorrectly, throw away leftovers and cook too much. Two-thirds of our food waste happens when items spoil or rot because they aren't used in time. The other one-third happens when we cook or serve too much. To be clear, food waste refers to edible food that is not eaten for one reason or another. Food scraps such as banana peels, apple cores and bones are not included.

When we throw away food, we also waste all the water and energy used to produce, package and transport food from the farm to our plates. This waste creates significant environmental impacts and is costly to family budgets.

Reducing food waste is an easy way to trim down our grocery bills and our environmental footprint. By making small shifts in how we shop or prepare and store food, we can keep our valuable resources from going to waste.

The following "Smart Tips" were created by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) based on their research. They conducted focus groups with Americans across the country to find out why food waste happens in the home, what the barriers are to reducing food waste, and what practices/tools are useful in actually reducing food waste.

How Much Food Are You Really Throwing Away?

Research shows that nearly everyone wastes more food than they think they do. The first step to reducing food waste and creating lasting awareness is to actually measure how much food we're throwing away. The US EPA has created the "Food: Too Good to Waste Challenge" to help you figure out how much food is really going to waste in your home and what you can do to waste less. Take the Challenge at www.cityofpaloalto.org/foodwaste and share your results with Zero Waste and the US EPA to improve their data on what's really happening in homes.

Smart Shopping: Buy What You Need

- Planning is key to avoiding wasted food. If you buy no more than what you expect to use, you will be more likely to keep it fresh and use it all.
- First, shop your cupboards and refrigerator.
- Then, make a shopping list with meals in mind and the timing of your next shopping trip.
- Include the quantities you need on your list to avoid overbuying.
- Be realistic—will you eat out this week?

Smart Storage: Keep Fruits and Vegetables Fresh

■ Fresh fruit and vegetables are the foods Americans waste most often. Usually we overbuy or don't use them in time. By storing them for maximum freshness, they'll taste better and last longer.

■ Learn the best way to store food (see City's website).

■ Separate ripe from non-ripe fruit.

■ Store bananas, apples, and tomatoes by themselves.

■ Use your freezer. If you can't eat food in time, you can often freeze it for later.

Smart Prep: Prep Now, Eat Later

■ Preparing perishable food soon after shopping makes it easier to whip up meals during the week. When you get home from the store, wash, dry, chop, slice, and place fresh food items in clear storage containers for snacks and easy cooking

■ Befriend your freezer and visit it often. Freeze food such as bread, sliced fruit or meat that you know you won't be able to eat in time.

■ Cook larger meals and freeze them to eat later.

Smart Saving: Eat What You Buy

- Be mindful of old ingredients and leftovers.
- Move food that's likely to spoil soon to the front of the shelf or to a designated "eat first" area. Challenge yourself to make a meal out of these items once a week.
- Store your leftovers in clear containers. If you can see what's inside, you'll be more likely to eat them.

■ Are you likely to have leftovers from any of your meals? Plan on an "eat the leftovers" night each week.

■ Learn the difference between "sell-by" and "use-by" and expiration dates.

For more information on these Smart Tips and how to reduce food waste at home, visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/foodwaste

*All facts in this article are from the Natural Resources Defense Council and United States Environmental Protection Agency.

ART IN THE PARK—RONA FOSTER



Creative expression is important to Rona. Now a visual artist, Rona has been a singer, songwriter and performer. Dancing for exercise and fun has been another creative expression for her. Having spent many enjoy-

able years teaching children ceramics and art, Rona now offers art and creativity workshops in her Palo Alto studio and surrounding area for adults. As a painter, mixed media, and clay artist, Rona delights in spending time in her art studio creating colorful works of art. She lives in Barron Park with her husband Ken and their cat Miso.

"Being an artist is a way of life that brings me great joy. When I'm in my art studio creating, I immerse myself in the process of making art, and time flies. As a painter and mixed media artist I paint with acrylic paint, often adding texture by using different kinds of paper, gels, and mediums. I'm drawn to painting landscapes and other nature-related subjects. I love using bold colors in my art work and am inspired by the mystery in nature and in life itself. As a clay artist, I create both functional and decorative pottery. There is always self-discovery, growth, and unlimited reward with the creative process."

Rona can be reached at ronasuef@gmail.com.



BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2015

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Cost:

Spring edition \$200—the same size ad as the ones here.
All other quarterly editions are \$50 per issue. If you join the BPA as a business member, your one-time \$50 ad is free.

Go to www.BPApaloalto.org to join on-line.