

# BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## New Market—Florist Brings Fresh Produce Back to the Neighborhood

By Sue Luttner



Photo by Lee Hanson

The Barron Park Market, which opened this summer as an extension of the Barron Park Florist, is the fruit of 10 years' cultivation by proprietor Hassan Bordbari, who's patiently refitted the auto-body shop he had to shut down after zoning changes in the late eighties.

"Every year, I added one piece," Bordbari explains. One year he upgraded the plumbing, for example, then the storage spaces, and finally he replaced the garage doors with a window facade.

When his block of El Camino was rezoned, Bordbari says, he'd expected his shop to be grandfathered in as an existing operation. Still, his wife at the time had been wanting to open a flower shop, so they dedicated a small corner of the garage to a florist business. "It was very hard to do both," Bordbari acknowledges, "the noise, the paint, the plants." But the demand for flowers grew.

Six years later, he'd already moved interior walls to make more room for the florist's, and the City was holding firm against a variance, so Bordbari reluctantly abandoned the garage. His old frame machine serves now as a table for potted plants.

The idea for a market came to him, and to a number of his flower customers, he says, when the All-American Market closed in 1997. Thinking long-term, he bought the All-American's equipment, which explains

[ CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ]

### INSIDE

3	4	5	5	6	7	8	14	15
Barron Park Business Beat	President's Message: The BPA Needs You	Barron Park Seniors' Section	Save a Barron Park Treasure	Vector Control	Kid's Korner	Sarah Wallis Barron Park Pioneer	Holiday Party & Donkey Parade	Emergency Preparedness

[ BARRON PARK MARKET CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 ]



Photo by Sue Luttner

**Customer Annelise Mora, who lives in Barron Park, visited the market for the first time about a month after it opened, after noticing the sign on El Camino.**

the classic shopping carts and shelving in the new market. Moving the refrigeration units, though, put them out of commission and cost a year's investment—but the upside is brand-new, low-energy refrigeration in the store today.

The produce is mostly local, from within about 100 miles, and includes organic options, all priced competitively. Like any small market, Barron Park doesn't carry giant economy-size anything, but it offers Middle Eastern breads, gourmet olive oils, and snacks of all sorts, priced to compete with the upscale groceries.

"Everything, we have it," Bordbari says, "We might not have 100 kinds of it, but we have it." If you're after a frozen treat, you can pull a packaged confection from one of the freezers or pay \$1 for a scoop of ice cream, \$2 for two.

The shelves are not yet full, Bordbari explains, because he wants to stock it with what his customers want. He encourages neighbors to use the suggestion box at the cash register, call him (493-2700), or send an email ([barronparkmarket@yahoo.com](mailto:barronparkmarket@yahoo.com)). If you carry home a melon that was already over the hill, he wants to hear about it.

He doesn't carry liquor, cigarettes, or risqué magazines, and fresh meat is still in the future.

The grocery is open every day, 9 am to 9

pm Monday through Saturday, closing at 7 pm on Sundays. At least for the opening months, there's always a Bordbari in the shop, possibly one of Hassan's three youngest children: Melissa, Maryam, or Matthew. "I've never worked this hard in my life," reports Maryam, a Gunn High School graduate and now a student at Foothill College.

"It's hard to explain to your friends," notes Matthew, a junior at Gunn. "They say, 'Hey, you're working, you're making money,' and I say 'No, I'm just working.'"

The Barron Park Market is one of the few small groceries where you can also buy a fresh bouquet or even a five-foot potted bird-of-paradise. Bordbari's experience with flowers and live plants is one reason he was willing to try fresh produce, he says. He can use some of the same suppliers.

"I was trained as an engineer, but my heart is here," he admits, nodding to the greenery in his back lot.

Bordbari's mechanical bent is what brought him to Barron Park, though. He moved alone from his native Tehran to Miami at the age of 18, with \$54 and no knowledge of English. "I didn't even know it was \$54," he says, "I didn't know the money yet."

He supported himself by working in fast-food restaurants and hammering out dents in cars. He bought a Valiant with two working forward gears and assembled a traveling dent-repair kit: "Dowels and a hammer, a can of Bondo, and a lot of sandpaper." He recruited customers where he saw them, pantomiming his offers, and he did the work on the spot. He gave up on school and became an auto-body gypsy, hammering his way across the country to San Francisco. When he needed gas, he says, he would stop at a shopping center and scout for dented fenders.

On the west coast Bordbari connected with a cousin in San Jose, who he says told him, "You stay here, you go to school, you learn English." Bordbari earned his degree at San Jose State, married, and went back into the auto-body business, but this time with a real garage, first in San Jose and then Palo Alto. He'd been renting his space on

El Camino since 1984, and had just exercised his option to buy before the new zoning laws entered the equation.

"I don't give up easy," Bordbari grins, "I look for what works."

The Barron Park Market is not just a convenience store. It's the product of our complex civic past, and one man's willingness to turn challenge into opportunity. Its history is one of immigration and adaptation, and the search for a match between a local need and Bordbari's property and hard work.

In the long run, the Barron Park Market will live or die by market forces: Bordbari can carry fresh produce only if customers buy it fast enough to make his wholesale quantities. Can an independent grocer survive in the era of big chains? Maybe, in Barron Park.

*Editor's note: The following section on the Barron Park Market was submitted by Lee Hanson, and helps stress the need for your patronage.*

Barron Park Market Residents finally have a place to pick up groceries—the newly opened Barron Park Market celebrated its grand opening in July. Located on El Camino Real (next to the Barron Park Nursery & Florist), the store is very convenient for our Barron Park community. But owner Hassan Bordbari reports that the store is suffering from lack of customers.

"I'm disappointed that not so many people have been coming in," Bordbari told the *Palo Alto Weekly* this summer. "The neighbors would tell me, 'You should open a market. We need one here.' But now where are they? Last week I had to throw out almost \$600 worth of food, because I won't sell anything that isn't fresh." Bordbari also said he strives to keep food affordable. "We send people out to check prices at other places, and make ours 10 to 15 percent lower."

The market's specialty is fresh produce. Gourmet cooks will be particularly pleased with the fresh herbs. There are plans to add more organic and kosher items and expand the dried fruit and nuts selection.

To passers by, the market looks small. But the store is quite deep—running all the way through the buildings (to the parking in back)—and contains a surprising number of grocery items.

Drop by with your shopping list—and be sure to check out the fruit and vegetable section! Open daily, 9 to 9 (9 to 7 on Sundays).

# THE BARRON PARK BUSINESS BEAT

By Lee Hanson



There are changes happening along El Camino. The Driftwood Deli and Market (3450 El Camino—corner of Matadero Avenue) recently put in an ice cream section—twelve flavors with a counter and stools like the old fashioned ice cream stores of the distant past. Steve Rezvani of the Driftwood Market has had the store for twelve years or more. The neighbors have watched gradual expansion with additional seating and a wide variety of sandwiches, soups, and salads. The ice cream “parlor” is the latest addition.

The Alma Shoe Repair and U.S. Post Office substation opened in late June at 3666-B El Camino (next to the Maytag Store)—cross street is Barron Avenue.

The owners (Rufo Lacerna and his wife) sold their home five years ago so they could buy the shoe repair and post office located in Alma Square (near the old Albertsons). Developers are closing down the shopping center, and the Lacernas received a letter in late May telling them to relocate in three weeks. Forced to find another site in Palo Alto (so they could keep the Post Office), the family found their present location at the last minute. Lots of elbow grease and paint have turned the store into a cheery environment. Be sure to drop in and welcome this hard-working family to our neighborhood.

## Kathy's Hair Design

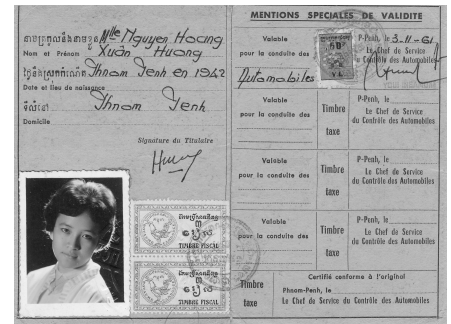
By Nancy Kramer

For more than fifteen years, Antoinette, proprietor of “Kathy’s Hair Design,” has been serving the Barron Park community, for which I’m most grateful! Not only because of the services she provides, but for her generosity and friendship. No one leaves “Kathy’s” empty handed, or hungry, for that matter. You may be sent off with a mango, a



pomelo, or some other exotic delicacy. Antoinette’s philosophy is that “The more you give, the more you get—the more you take, the more you pay.” Being of service to seniors is Antoinette’s specialty—going so far as driving them to and from appointments.

Antoinette arrived in this country in 1971, after spending time in Vietnam, Cambodia, Hong Kong and Paris, France, where her sister and physician brother-in-law live. As a result of her travels, and a French convent education, Antoinette speaks four



languages: Vietnamese, Chinese (two dialects), French, and English. A holder of an International Drivers License, Antoinette has been driving since she was fourteen!

In her former life, Antoinette helped a friend start a restaurant in Los Angeles, then worked at a lab, driving hundreds of miles delivering blood, etc. Then, for six years, she worked in Carmel as the companion to the widow of a college president. She later helped refugees get their papers through immigration, and organized events in Monterrey, featuring famous singers from Viet Nam, in memory of a lost country. Antoinette then worked as a governess to three children of physicians, before attending Arnold Beauty College in Fremont, where she met her dear friend, Tracy, who helps her to this day. After beauty school, Antoinette worked for ‘Super Cuts’ before deciding to become her own boss.

Antoinette’s favorite recreation is fishing; she especially loves to introduce children to the joys of catching fish! Her hobby involves fish as well—raising tropical fish. There are usually at least two active aquariums in her shop at any time.

Antoinette says, “I’m not perfect—if you like what I do, come back”—and I (the writer) do! Also, she says that “thank you is just a word unless it comes from the heart”—which is where Antoinette’s generosity comes from.

Antoinette also says, “Never give up!”

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE BPA NEEDS YOU

By Doug Moran, BPA President

**A**t the membership level, the BPA is the strongest of Palo Alto's neighborhood associations: Over a quarter of Barron Park households contribute to the BPA, many above the basic dues level. Feedback from individuals further confirms that residents value highly what the BPA adds to the neighborhood.

However, the participation in the leadership of the BPA—on the Board and on committees—has been in decline for a decade, and has dropped to a very worrisome level (see the sidebar “A Call to Members”). This is not a phenomenon unique to the BPA, but is shared with a

## A Call to Members

I recently received a note from a member who was leaving our fair neighborhood after living here for 12 wonderful years. It said, “We feel fortunate to have been able to modestly assist this great association and we wish you great luck in continuing making Barron Park the great neighborhood that it is.”

Isn't that a neat note? I'll bet it sums up what most of you think, too. I want to thank all 450 members for your support, and especially those members who have renewed year after year.

But this year, we need something more. We need you! Both our President and Vice President are serving under extended term limits, our Secretary position is vacant, and our dear Treasurer has resigned after many years of service. A number of committees have vacant Chairs, such as Beautification, Community-Business Relations, Natural Habitat Restoration/Preservation, Parks, and Seniors.

We need a few members to step up to the plate. Why not start by attending the next Board meeting? Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:15 PM. Please give us a call at 856-3302 to let us know you are coming.

See you at the next Board meeting!  
Thanks for your support!

Linda Elder  
Membership Chair

wide range of other civic groups.

The situation that worries me most is that activities that used to involve a committee are now too often handled by a single person, eliminating the social interaction and support that are key motivators in many civic organizations. And the time and energy of a single volunteer is often not enough to produce a satisfying result. Thus they either burn out or get discouraged and frustrated.

We have tried to avoid this by encouraging new volunteers to consider activities where there is a critical mass, when we would prefer to be supporting the activity in which they are most interested.

Although this assessment sounds dire, it also means that by volunteering, you can have a big impact. And the BPA can provide substantial leverage for your efforts. First, the current leadership can provide substantial mentoring and assistance in dealing with the City and other organizations. Second, our email lists, newsletters and other publicity help you reach a larger audience. Third, because of the generous financial contributions of our members, we have funds to invest in getting appropriate new activities started.

Some brief descriptions of a sample of ideas and needs follow. If they catch your interest, please talk to me for more details.

### Potential new events and projects

**Business Liaison:** Help our Barron Park businesses feel supported by Barron Park. Contribute articles to our new “Business Beat.” Visit with them to see how we could better serve them through advertising, stories, and whatever they might suggest. Get them interested in joining the BPA so that they receive our quarterly newsletters.

**House-and-Garden Fair:** This very popular event was discontinued when several of the key organizers dropped out because they felt they were just repeating themselves and thus it was no longer any fun. Lynnne Melena (a relatively new Board member) is looking to revive this event, and will be looking for help.

**Native Habitat:** There are opportunities to improve the native habitat in several places, most notably “Strawberry Hill” (the

triangle of School District land behind the athletic fields) and the creek banks. Benefits include a more attractive landscape and better support for native wildlife. Aside: I (and others) have recently seen a covey of quail in the donkey pasture.

**Pocket Park:** The barren land along Matadero Creek across from Whitsell could be a nice small park for people to sit. The City allowed it to become the way it is because it was reserved for parking equipment for various now-completed construction projects (storm drains, resurfacing Matadero Avenue). While there is support in principle for such “pocket parks,” the realities of the City budget is that nothing is likely to happen unless pushed by the neighborhood, both volunteers and contributions.

### Support activities

**Communications Director(s):** Members tell me that they really appreciate the notifications and other information on the BPA email lists. Much of this information comes from other sources, but has to be “massaged” before it goes to the list. This involves a fair amount of work in small increments: It is amazing how many of the people who send out announcements cannot put themselves in the place of the audience: they don't format their messages to make them easy to scan and they don't understand that a message to a list with hundreds of members is very different from an email to a close friend.

In addition to people who just like pushing out information, this role provides an easy quick entry point for people who want to learn more about what is going on in the community (often in preparation for taking a role as a leader).

**Local Political Issues:** The neighborhood associations have emerged as a major factor on a variety of issues related to the quality of life in Palo Alto. Palo Alto Neighborhoods (PAN) is the umbrella group of neighborhood associations and has sponsored forums on the loss of retail and on the magnitude of housing development that were credited with pushing those topics to the fore. I have been heavily involved in several of these efforts because the information being made available often failed to explain likely impacts on residents (in terms residents could understand).



Consequently, the perspective, concerns and priorities of the typical resident are often poorly represented in the deliberations and subsequent decisions.

**Existing Activities**

**Seniors:** Long-time coordinator Mary Jane Leon has had to step down and we don't yet have a replacement.

**Emergency Preparedness/Public Safety/ Neighborhood Watch:** In the mid-1990s, the City effectively reduced the role of residents to being victims and bystanders. After many years of lobbying by the neighborhoods, the current City leaders are supporting including the neighborhoods and residents as participants and resources in these areas. Lydia Kou (new Board member) has succeeded Patrick Muffler in chairing this activity, and she is going to need significant help to put our plans into place.

**Board: Fresh Faces**

Although we have three new Board members this year (Lydia Kou, Lynnie Melena, John St. Clair), it only offsets the loss of three (Mary Jane Leon, Karen Michael, Patrick Muffler). The current nine-member Board is too small for the long-term health of the BPA. In the 1990s, we hovered around 15 Board members.

By all accounts, the current Board works well together and people see the meetings as both effective and fun. However, because of the vacant positions, we have Board members doing tasks because they are important to the neighborhood rather than because those tasks are ones they are personally interested in. It is not that these tasks are uninteresting, but that they just aren't a match to the current Board members.

As noted in the sidebar, I have exceeded the term limits for President (I became President in January 2002, having been Vice President since 1997). Although I am very flattered with how many people tell me that I am doing a good job and they want me to continue as President, the organization needs a new President for its own good. One wants the transition to occur when the old president still has enough interest and energy to mentor and assist his successor—I have seen too many organizations wait too long, with the new president being "thrown into the deep end." Second, the transition encourages the group to revisit a variety of decisions, and they often find that some underlying assumptions and rationales are no longer

valid. Third, the personal interests and talents of a president inevitably influence the focus of an organization, and periodic turnover helps maintain balance in the priorities.

Note: When I am replaced as President, it doesn't mean I will leave the Board. And many of the tasks I currently handle are unrelated to my position as President.

**Conclusion**

The BPA is currently in a situation where too much of the essential activities are being performed by too few people. The organization needs to have a larger core group (the Board) so that it can better withstand the comings and goings of individual volunteers.

The committee structure provides a way for you to become more involved and make a contribution without making a large up-front commitment. It allows you to see the workings of the BPA and to determine when and if you want a larger role. This applies to the full range of residents, from new arrivals who want to better connect with their neighbors to retirees who are looking for activities where they can benefit the community.

If you are interested, contact me (856-3302) or one of the other Board members (see [www.bpaonline.org](http://www.bpaonline.org) for contact information).

**Barron Park Seniors' Section**

By Nancy Hamilton

Mary Jane Leon has resigned as Senior's Chair. We thank her for all of her dedicated hard work. In the next issue we'll run a farewell article about Mary Jane.

In the meanwhile, we don't have anyone who is willing to take her place as liaison to the lunch planners, originator of new projects, to submit quarterly Senior's articles, etc.

So I thought I'd give you a teaser... something to find out about and report back to our readers. It's REX—equity purchase vs. reverse mortgage.

If you go online to [www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com) (the S.F. Chronicle's Website) and search on "REX equity" you'll find a good article about this.

Many of us would like to know more — can you help?

**Save a Barron Park Treasure!**

The Barron Park Childcare Co-op has been a wonderful neighborhood resource for years. Keep it going strong!

This co-op has been providing Barron Park families with no-cost, reliable and quality childcare for many years. It's also been a great way to get to know neighbors and make friends all over Barron Park who you might not otherwise meet.

But the families that have been active in the co-op in recent years have "outgrown" it as their children have grown up. Now, the co-op needs new families to rebuild the membership and keep this wonderful institution thriving.

How the coop works:

Member families "sit" for each other, earning hours when they sit other kids and spending hours as they have other families sit for them. Jobs in the co-op, such as tracking hours, are rotated among members.

It's easy, guilt-free (never an imposition!), truly affordable and so convenient. Imagine having a dozen or more people you can call at the last moment for a sitter! Best of all, you know your child is in good hands.

Please join and help rebuild the Barron Park Childcare Co-op. Learn more by contacting Katy Mast at [Katy.Mast@gmail.com](mailto:Katy.Mast@gmail.com) or at (650) 856-6969 and /or Gretchen Reynolds at [Gretchen\\_Reynolds@yahoo.com](mailto:Gretchen_Reynolds@yahoo.com) or at (650) 493-2118.

**BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

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# VECTOR CONTROL

By Sue Luttner

## New Infestations: How You Can Help

Santa Clara County and the State of California are asking for our help this year in the fight against two ecological invaders:

- West Nile Virus (WNV)—Numbers were down in 2006; maybe countermeasures are taking effect. Please continue to report dead birds and squirrels to the state, as described below, and abate mosquito habitat in your yard.
- Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM)—Still a growing problem in the Bay Area. Please follow the quarantine recommendations, and report suspected LBAM specimens to the state.

## West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus was first identified in California with a single human case in 2002. Spread by migrating birds infected through mosquito bites, the virus had spread to all 58 counties by 2005, with 880 human cases and 19 fatalities that year. After aggressive abatement programs, numbers were down in 2006, with only 278 human cases and 7 fatalities. Several counties had no WNV activity at all.

By the end of August, 2007, however, Santa Clara County had identified 50 birds apparently dead from WNV this year, out of the 789 total for the state. If you find

a dead bird or squirrel, please contact the state's Dead Bird Hotline by visiting [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov) or calling toll free 1-877-WNV-BIRD. Health workers will ask for the location and description of the animal and will either come out and retrieve it for testing or provide you with safe disposal instructions.

Meanwhile, to protect your own health and reduce the overall mosquito population:

- Leave no water standing in your yard for more than a week at a time. Clean out bird-baths regularly and cover containers that may accumulate rain or irrigation water, including recycling bins and stored flower pots, buckets, boats, and so on.
- Clear out dense, shady thickets, where mosquitoes hide during the day.

- Wear protective clothing against mosquito bites. Young babies are especially vulnerable to WNV and should be screened while outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.

You can ask the county for a free audit of your property for mosquito, vermin, and wildlife habitat. If you have a pond, health service employees will bring you a bucket of hardy, cold-water, mosquito-eating fish. Check the county vector-control web site at <http://www.sccgov.org/portal/site/vector/>

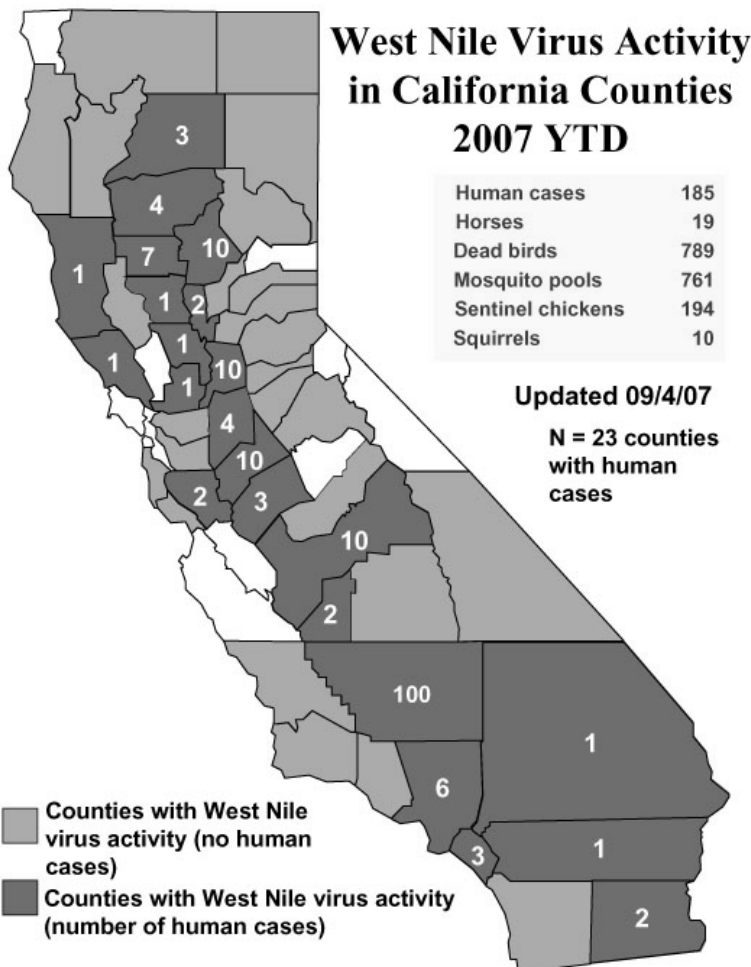
## Light Brown Apple Moth

The Light Brown Apple Moth is an Australian agricultural pest that first appeared in California only a few months ago, in Alameda on March 22, 2007. Since then, hundreds of individual specimens have been identified in nine Bay Area counties. Three have been collected downstream from us in the Matadero Creek and Canal. The quarantine zone that already included our neighborhood last spring has been expanded further north, into San Mateo County.

Please do not move plants or plant material from your yard, even to another yard in the quarantine area. Dispose of all yard waste through the City composting service, and instruct any contractors on your property to do the same.

The LBAM is light brown and about a quarter inch long, and it flies at night. The adult moth is difficult to distinguish from other species, but the young larvae feed on the undersides of leaves, under a tell-tale canopy of fine silken threads. Larger larvae typically migrate to a space near a stem or fruit, and construct a silken habitat for the final push to maturity, usually accomplished within a rolled leaf.

For more information, including a map of the quarantine area, see the LBAM update on the Department of Agriculture web site at <http://www.sccgov.org/portal/site/ag/>. To report a suspicious specimen, call 1-800-491-1899.



# KID'S KORNER

By Halimah Van Tuyl

## A Gift That Keeps On Giving

When fall comes, teachers meet their new students, and soon thereafter get to know the parents and even grandparents who are connected to the children. Juana Briones School is fortunate that many of these folks volunteer to type stories in the classroom, organize the Harvest Festival, play the piano, drive on field trips, and help with owl pellet dissection. There are dedicated heroes who provide leadership in the PTA and the school Site Council. Other parents share their talents and special knowledge with classes in ways that bring the world to our neighborhood school.

Inside the classroom, volunteers give lectures on their professional niche, like parent Bob Price, who works in robotics. The spellbound fifth graders who heard his presentation couldn't believe someone gets paid to have that job. Jean Lythcott whose two grandsons are a students, volunteered to lead a once-a-week science seminar on force & gravity for Kindergartners. She also shared African storytelling, another of her specialties. Kate Hill, parent of two Briones graduates, has been a fairy godmother to countless students and teachers. Her hands have worked magic, sewing costumes for over twenty plays—from a 5th grade production of "Romeo & Juliet" to the singing vegetables in the Kindergarten "Stone Soup" musical.

Artist Marie Moore has given Briones students her time to develop original visual arts projects. Marie, who worked as an aide at Briones for many years, has now returned as a volunteer because, "I just love the students at this school, and I find satisfaction in introducing children to fine artists' materials and new ideas." Most recently, she collaborated with 2nd grade teacher Sue Garadis.

Greg Kovaks, a scientist at NASA & Stanford, and his wife Laurel Joyce have children in 1st & 4th grade. Their enthusiasm for their work prompted them to offer science workshops to K-5th graders. Not just an assembly, but individual class presentations, where everyone got a front row seat! Briones students got to hold moon rocks and hear about the MARS Mission from Greg, who was one of the scientists to decide where the rover should land. "May I take the moon rock home to show my mom?" asked one excited second grader. Greg said, "No," but recognized the children's non-stop questions as a sure-fire proof that kids love to interact with real scientists.

Retired Seniors from RSVP like Dave Miller and Jack Edelstein have come to Briones weekly for five years to be reading mentors. This regular attention helps the children become more fluent, capable readers. At the other end, Gunn High School students, freshman to seniors, participate one or two days a week in tutoring kids in the after-school homework club.

Some volunteers share their talents after school. Such was the case when Peter Kao, parent of three Briones graduates, set up his telescope on the grassy playground and hosted a family evening of stargazing. Peter, who is a doctor by day at Stanford Hospital, hooked everyone on astronomy, sharing his hobby with all ages. The event was attended by over 60 people, who walked to school with a blanket, thermos, and their curiosity.

The teachers of Juana Briones School would like to pay tribute to the volunteers—those who have been mentioned here, and all those who give freely of time and talent to nurture children and to spark personal connections and excitement for learning.

For more information, please contact the Principal, Mr. Mike O'Neill at Juana Briones Elementary School.

## The 2008 Barron Park Donkeys Calendar is coming!

Calendars make great gifts and these ones help support our neighborhood donkeys. 100% of proceeds will be donated to the Palo Alto Donkey Project to help keep Perry and Niner a happy and healthy part of Barron Park.

Calendars will be \$15 each (tax deductible) and feature photos of Mickey, Perry and Niner as well as original watercolors by neighborhood artist Edith Smith. Quantities are limited, though.

Please contact Lynnne Melena at 493-2135 or [lynniemelena@gmail.com](mailto:lynniemelena@gmail.com) for purchases.

## BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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BPA meetings are held the 3rd

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

Call Doug Moran for location: 856-3302

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

# Sarah Wallis—Suffragist Leader—Completing the Story

By Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

Sarah Wallis was one of the most notable people to have lived on the land that is now our neighborhood. She was one of the very first pre-gold rush “Anglo” emigrants to California, a prominent lady in San Francisco and Mayfield society, and the leader of the women’s suffrage movement on the west coast.

Part One of her story appeared in the Fall, 2003 edition of this newsletter, and covered her importance in California and Barron Park history, her early life as Sarah Armstrong, her marriage to gunsmith Allen Montgomery, and the first half of their overland emigration to California.

Part Two, in the winter 2004 issue, covered her adventures during the second half of her trek in 1844 with the Stevens party, the first emigrant group to bring wagons across the Sierra Nevada.

It also covered Sarah’s life in the Sierra Nevada foothills, Sutter’s Fort (Sacramento) and San Francisco during the years 1845–47. Part two concluded with the abandonment of Sarah by her first husband, the gunsmith Allen Montgomery, in San Francisco, just before the Gold Rush began.

Part Three, in the summer 2007 issue, picked up the story again after a lengthy hiatus.

After publishing Part Two in 2004, I gained access to the papers of the late Dorothy Regnery, who was researching to write a biography of Sarah Wallis. Regnery’s research notes include more information on this part of Sarah’s life, so I started Part Three with a more detailed description of the final years of Sarah and Allen’s married life together, including his abandonment of Sarah. It went on to tell of her marriage to the successful businessman and politician, Talbot Green. Green was subsequently exposed as an embezzler and bigamist, with a wife and children in Pennsylvania. He immediately abandoned Sarah, although leaving her partially supported financially.

The story continued with the birth of Sarah and Talbot’s son, also named Talbot, and her subsequent marriage to a lawyer, Joseph Wallis. Sarah and Joseph began a long and happy marriage. While still living in her San Francisco cottage on Mission Street in Happy Valley, Joseph adopted her son Talbot and they had two more children of their own, Eva and Josephine. Part

Three wound up with Sarah’s purchase in 1856 of Mayfield Farm (the future Barron Park neighborhood) in Fremont Township on the San Francisco Peninsula and construction of an impressive Victorian gingerbread mansion on the property.

## Sarah’s Mansion

Part Four begins with the move into Sarah’s Mansion on the farm. The new home was completed and the growing family of five moved in on November 27, 1857. Sixteen months later their fourth child Joseph was born at the farm. The house was large with two full stories each with 14-foot ceilings and large, tall win-

dows. There was a partial third story of rooms under tall garrets. A wide covered verandah wrapped around the front and sides, and Victorian “gingerbread” style woodwork ornamented the verandah and garret rooflines. The comfortable Crosby farmhouse, itself no more than four years old, was retained. The mansion was built in front of it and connected, and the farmhouse then served as kitchen and utility rooms, with servant’s quarters on the second floor.

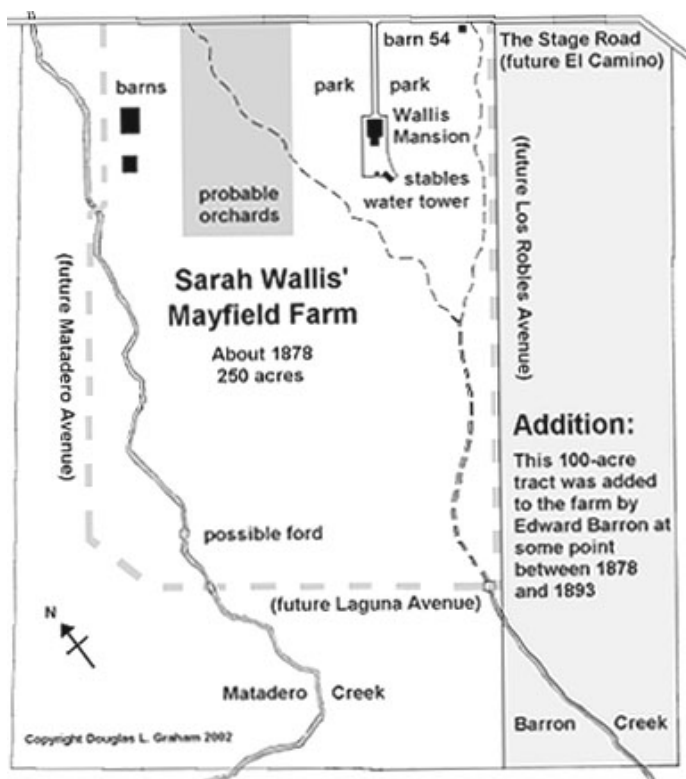
The esteemed local historian Dorothy Regnery wrote that the house was the first showplace estate built on the then-rural Peninsula and was the ultimate in the style of its time, especially for a country place. She wrote that “The oak dotted acres were landscaped with varieties of exotic ornamental trees, shrubs, colorful flowers and broad lawns.” Some of the trees Sarah and Joseph planted are still alive today on properties along La Selva Drive, Magnolia Drive and Military Way.

## Mayfield Farm

It is not known if Crosby, a lawyer, actually cultivated anything on his “farm,” but he may have leased most of the acreage for growing hay or grazing livestock grazing. He apparently built a barn where the Blockbuster store is now, at the corner of El Camino Real and Los Robles Avenue. “Barn 54” is shown on the earliest map of the area and may have been stables for stagecoach horses. The California Stage Company instituted daily stagecoach runs between San Francisco and San Jose in 1854, and this could have been one of the locations where they changed teams.

In any case, Sarah and Joseph planted extensive orchards, as shown in the 1876 lithograph. See the map accompanying this article to get a sense of the farm in the 1860s.

The first historical and pictorial atlas of Santa Clara County, published in 1876, had a full page lithograph of the house (see next page). The caption read “Res. of Mrs. Sarah Wallis, Mayfield, Santa Clara Co., Cal.” Dorothy Regnery wrote that Sarah always insisted that the farm be identified as belonging to her, as opposed to Joseph, or to both of them jointly. However, public employees apparently took little note of this. On the Fremont Township map the



250 acre parcel is inscribed "Mrs. J. S. Wallis." In spite of Sarah's legal ownership of the farm and the fact that she had bought it with her own assets, census takers recorded the real estate as being owned by Joseph S. Wallace (sic), worth \$30,000 in 1860 and by Joseph S. Wallis, worth \$65,000 in 1870.

Regnery observed that: "In addition to wanting the vote for women, Sarah was determined to have the law amended to enable married women to make contracts and to manage their own estates."

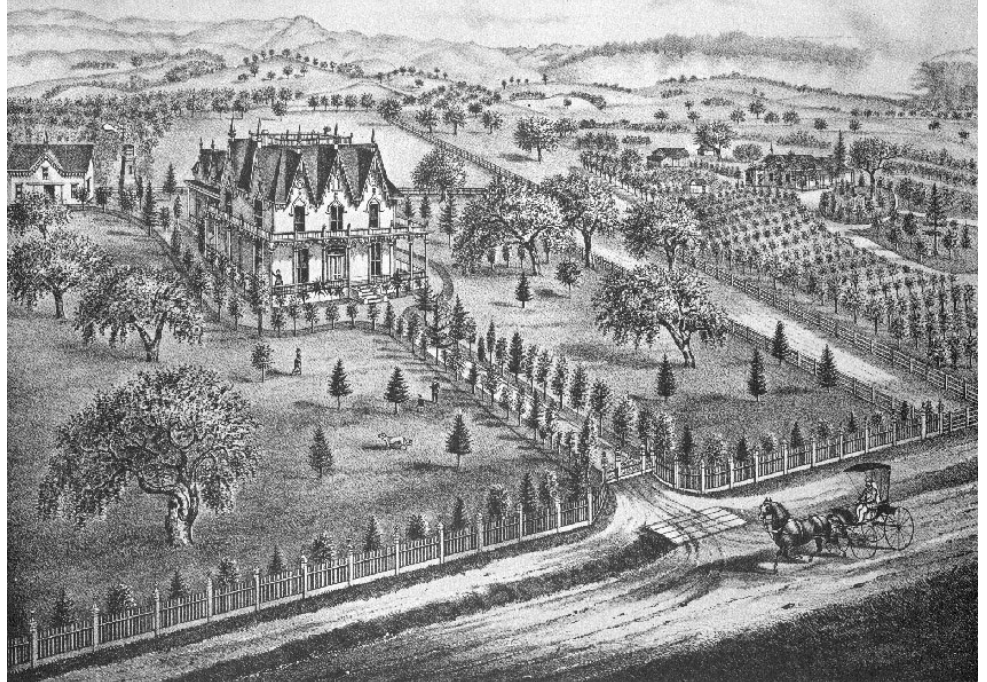
### Joseph Wallis—Judge and Senator

Immediately after moving to Mayfield, in early 1858, Joseph Wallis was elected a Justice of the Peace for Fremont Township, which covered the area that is now Palo Alto and included most of Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills. That same year, he was also elected a Justice of the Court of Sessions, Santa Clara County (roughly equivalent to today's Superior Court). From this time on, he was known by the honorific "Judge."

In 1862 he was nominated by the Union Party (a Civil War fusion of Republicans and "War Democrats") and elected the State Senator for Santa Clara County. He introduced numerous bills, most of which passed, and served on several committees, the most significant being the Judiciary Committee. During the period 1862–64 he was involved in land speculation with Rancho Buri Buri in San Mateo County. For many years he was the only lawyer in the township.

### Sarah's Community Leadership in Mayfield

Mayfield came into being as a small community clustered around "Uncle Jim's Cabin," a public house built on the San Francisco-San Jose stage road approximately at today's intersection of El Camino Real and California Avenue in 1853. A Post Office was soon established and took its name from nearby Mayfield Farm, established the same year by Elisha Crosby. This was just one year after the founding of the village that later became Mountain View, and about 40 years before Palo Alto came into existence. By 1855, Mayfield had grown into a village with a full range of businesses to serve the existing ranchos and the farms and estates that were being established in the surrounding area. A town plat was surveyed on March 20, 1867 and filed with the County in July. Joseph Wallis was apparently the person who convinced the town founder William Paul to retain the



Residence of Mrs. Sarah Wallis, Mayfield, Santa Clara Co., Cal. — 1875

name Mayfield rather than to name it for a place he remembered in Scotland.

Almost from the time they moved in, both the Wallises, but especially Sarah, became recognized as leading citizens in the small community. It is clear that they had chosen life in the country over the attractions of the city. As Dorothy Regnery wrote: "The Wallis family made Mayfield their year-around home...(It)...was not a summer country estate from which the family fled to San Francisco or to San Jose to participate in the winter social season," like the wealthy San Franciscans who moved to the sunny Peninsula during the following decade when the railroad made commuting to the city easy. "Sarah was long remembered by the old-timers in Mayfield as a very good, friendly woman who was kind to all in need. Sarah was never haughty"...nor demanded a superior role because of her wealth. "Sarah and Mrs. Joseph Spaulding, the wife of the local hotel keeper often were called, even in the middle of the night, to mid-wife for local women having children." In 1866 the Wallises helped establish the Methodist Church, the first protestant church in Mayfield. They continued to attend and financially support it until Joseph died and Sarah moved away.

In the early 1860s, Sarah assisted the new San Francisco and San Jose Railroad in obtaining right-of-way through various properties in the Mayfield area and from there to San Jose. She may have been a

shareholder in the railroad company. When the railroad reached the Mayfield area in 1863, the company established a station it called "Mayfield," approximately where the Churchill Avenue grade crossing is now located. This disturbed the citizens of Mayfield, who did not want the station three-fourths of a mile north of the community. In 1867, Sarah persuaded the company to move the station to its current location on California Avenue (then known as Lincoln Avenue). For this, she was honored by the citizens of Mayfield at a gala banquet on March 29, 1867. As the *San Mateo County Gazette* reported on April 6: "The Complimentary Ball given by the citizens of Mayfield to Mrs. J. S. Wallis, came off at 'Uncle Jim's' on Friday night of last week, and was in every particular a success. As a prelude to the opening of the ball, cannon were fired—accompanied with quite a display of fireworks. At nine o'clock the dancing commenced, which was kept up until daylight, with the exception of an intermission for supper. There were some 80 couples present. There were about 30 persons from Redwood City, and others from Searsville, Woodside, San Jose and San Francisco. Mayfield seems to be the banner town for getting up balls, and no pains are spared to make them pleasant to all who attend."

### Sarah Becomes Involved in the Suffrage Movement

It was about this time that Sarah began to devote her life to women's rights and



equality with men. On February 19, 1868, she attended a lecture on woman suffrage by Laura DeForce Gordon, a prominent Northern California suffragist. Sarah corresponded with Laura occasionally for the next ten years, and considered her a personal friend. Four manuscript letters from Sarah to Laura in the Bancroft Library collection are proof of Sarah's functional literacy, which has sometimes been questioned.

Sarah also attended a lecture by Anna Dickinson when she visited California in the summer of 1869. Many visitors from the east began to show up in California after the transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10 of that year. In July, San Francisco women, inspired by Dickinson, organized a suffrage society, as did women in at least seven other California cities.

On January 26, 1870, Sarah Wallis attended the first joint meeting, at Dashaway Hall in San Francisco, of about 120 delegates from the nine recently founded local woman suffrage societies existing in California. This was, effectively, the birth of the California Suffrage Association. The first evening session was filled to capacity and many could not gain entrance into the crowded hall. Sarah was elected President of the convention. Regnery wrote: "...the convention was a success. For four days the meetings were well attended by men and women of all classes of society. Much public interest was aroused. Throughout 1870 meetings were held in California keeping up the interest, and more local societies were organized."

Regnery summarized the news media response thusly; "The *Mayfield Enterprise* mentioned the local society's events but humorously poked (fun) at its efforts rather than give notice of its serious consideration of issues." The San Francisco newspapers were divided in their responses; "The *Alta* was bluntly negative. The *Chronicle*, *Bulletin* and *Call* were opposed and maintained a subtle war against suffrage. The *Examiner* mildly ridiculed the subject. The *San Francisco Post*, *Sacramento Bee* and the *San Jose Daily Mercury* defended women's rights."

In 1870, the first bill asking for an amendment to the State Constitution granting women suffrage was introduced in the state legislature. A joint committee reported favorably on it but it was defeated by vote of both houses. Thereafter it became a biennial issue in the legislature. However, it would be another 41 years before California would grant women the vote, and

then only after following the lead of Wyoming and two other western states.

### **Joseph and Sarah Travel to Washington, D.C.**

In February, 1870, Joseph and Sarah set out to travel to Washington D.C. They were able to take the train all the way. Neither of them had been out of California since they arrived. Sarah had emigrated by walking from Missouri in 1844-45 and Joseph came by ship in 1849. It must have been an incredible feeling for Sarah to ride along, sitting on a plush seat in a heated, lighted railway car and dining on delicacies while looking out over the beautiful snow-covered terrain of the Sierra Nevada. She must have been thinking of her own struggle on foot through the snow, freezing cold, wet and half-starved, over the same route—only 24 years before—when it was an unmarked, untrod route—not a trail in any sense—through an unmapped wilderness. No one would have had the energy or patience to even consider the beauty of the surroundings when the struggle was so brutal. What an incredible change to occur within one short generation! Sarah's 1870 experience must have been much more like our travel experiences in the 21st Century than like her own experience in 1844-45.

After arriving in Washington, the couple enjoyed Joseph's swearing-in as a member of the bar of the United States Supreme Court. Again, imagine Sarah's thoughts as she saw her husband, whom she had urged to study law and supported during his efforts, finally achieve one of the pinnacles of his profession. This was the ostensible reason for their trip, and not much else about their journey remains in the meager documentation that has survived on Sarah's life. It is known that Sarah and Joseph were present in the Senate Chamber (probably in the visitor's gallery) on February 25 when Hiram R. Revels, the nation's first black senator, was sworn in. This would have been of great interest to Sarah because at that time, it was believed that the recent grant of black suffrage would mean quick success for the women's endeavors. After Joseph returned home, the March 12 *Mayfield Enterprise* published a letter from him that included this paragraph: "I now desire to see woman occupy her sphere, on the broad ground of equality before law. I hope to live to see the day when woman will sit side by side with man in the Senate of our nation and may I be present and see the first one of that body, crowned with its honors. The day is

not far distant, it is within our life time to happen." Unfortunately, neither Joseph nor Sarah lived to see the day.

### **Early Hints of Future Financial Problems**

Sarah must have left Washington soon after Revels' swearing-in, because on March 5 she was in Mayfield at the first meeting of the Mayfield Suffrage Association, which she had organized, and was elected the first President. According to the *Mayfield Enterprise* of March 12, she presented a "picture" of Jesus' entombment to the Methodist Pastor at a "surprise visit" she organized the previous Tuesday, when the Pastor was showered with gifts, food and money. On the 21st, Laura DeForce Gordon spoke in Mayfield, and this was also organized by Sarah.

Perhaps the cost of the Washington trip helped bring developing financial problems to the fore, because she ran the following advertisement in the *Enterprise* in March and again on July 30; "To rent, that elegant and well finished mansion on the Mayfield Ranch. For further particulars apply to Mrs. S. Wallis, Mayfield." Also, the *Enterprise* ran an ad on May 28 announcing that: "A. Kilgore & Co. have opened a fruit store on Lincoln Street, where can be found the choicest fruit of the season...The fruit is from the splendid orchard of the "Mayfield Farm," which is a sufficient recommendation in itself." In July they ran the following ad: "A. Kilgore & Co. having purchased all the fruit grown on the 'Mayfield Farm,' respectfully announce that they will run a wagon through the county for the purpose of selling this CHOICE FRUIT, sell at the orchard, and also keep a good assortment at their store on Lincoln Street."

The Mayfield Woman's Suffrage Association continued to meet frequently during the first half of 1870, then apparently less frequently the second half and through 1871. Dances were held at several meetings including at a "Suffrage Social" in August 1870 and at the celebration of the first anniversary of the founding, held on March 9, 1871. Sarah was occupied, too, with the business of the California Suffrage Association, and convened its second annual meeting in San Francisco in February, 1871.

### **National Suffrage Leaders Visit Mayfield farm**

Anna Dickinson's visit to California in 1869 got the suffrage movement going here, but the momentum slowed in 1870

and stopped in 1871. The National leaders became concerned about this and decided another stimulus from the east was called for. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton traveled west together to “energize” the movement on the west coast, arriving in Oakland on July 9, 1871. Stanton and Anthony spoke separately in San Francisco on July 11 and 12, respectively. Stanton’s lecture was well-received, but Anthony diverted herself into an ignorant defense of a local murderess, and was widely and soundly, even viciously criticized. She inadvertently gave her enemies the opening they needed to change the subject from the rationale for woman suffrage to the competency of Susan B. Anthony as an advocate. After this debacle, per their prior plan, the two leaders went different directions to better cover the entire coast. Anthony cancelled the rest of her lectures in San Francisco.

At some point before Stanton’s return to the east on August 22, she was a guest of Sarah’s. She wrote that Sarah’s Mayfield Farm was “...the rendezvous of lecturers and writers in the great work of woman’s emancipation.” Anthony was not so smooth. After her August 4 visit, in the company of two local suffrage leaders, she noted in her diary that she had called on “Mrs Wallace (sic) of (the) Missouri (wagon) train.” In other words, what had impressed her about Sarah was her emigration experiences, and there is a slight suggestion of eastern disdain for the relatively unlettered but vigorous westerner.

For the next three months Anthony lectured throughout the Northwest. According to Regnery, the newspapers described her as “fluent and argumentative,” “forcible and logical” and “earnest and honest.” By the time she returned to the S.F. Bay Area in December, the controversy over her July speech had died out, and she was well received in Stockton, Sacramento, Oakland, San Jose, Mayfield and San Francisco.

For two nights, Anthony was a guest of Sarah’s, and apparently warmed up to her hostess. According to Dorothy Regnery, she wrote of having a “pleasant” time and observed the grandeur of Mayfield Farm, noting that “Mrs. W owns large state, fine orchard and grounds.” Anthony was much impressed that an omnibus load of her supporters “drove up from San Jose 17 miles” to attend her lecture. It was at Rich’s Hall in Mayfield on Monday Evening, December 10, 1871. There was a large audience, and J.J. Owen, Editor of the *San Jose Mercury* present told her: “Miss Anthony, you touch

their rock every time.” As part of the meeting, there was choral entertainment. In later years, Sarah Wallis repeatedly utilized music to advance her programs for temperance and suffrage. Anthony mentioned the beauty of Sarah’s daughters, who were members of the chorus.

### **A Ball and Midnight Supper**

In contrast to the routine lectures on Anthony’s circuit, the one at Mayfield was climaxed by a ball and midnight supper in the Wallis Mansion—typical of Sarah Wallis’ flare for entertainment. When Anthony left Mayfield Farm she noted that Sarah had donated \$20 to the cause—the third-largest donation received in six months on the western tour (\$20 was the equivalent of perhaps \$300–400 today). Anthony wound up her tour with a speech at the Y.M.C.A. in San Francisco on December 15. The occasion was the third state meeting of suffrage societies and culminated with a banquet at the Grand Hotel honoring Susan B. Anthony.

### **Sarah Becomes the California State Leader**

There is not much in the record about the California suffrage movement for the next eighteen months, until July 10, 1873, when the California State Woman’s Suffrage Educational Association was incorporated in San Francisco with Sarah Wallis as the President. This replaced the previous loose confederation of local societies. The objectives of the new association were; “To procure for Woman the Election Franchise; Embracing All the Rights, privileges and immunities of Civil and Political liberty; and to educate her to fully comprehend and appreciate the various measures, duties and principles, in the economy (sic) of a free government.”

### **Lobbyist for Equality**

During the 1870s, Sarah was involved in lobbying for legislation giving women equal rights. For example, California statutes did not permit women to become attorneys. In 1877 the Senator from Santa Clara County presented a bill to change this, which became known as the “Woman Lawyer Bill.” The California Woman’s Suffrage Education Association appointed Sarah Wallis, Laura DeForce Gordon and two other leaders as a committee to lobby the bill and petition for suffrage. Overcoming bitter opposition and an initial defeat in the assembly, the proponents eventually won passage by both houses and approval by the Governor just before the deadline for his signature. This permitted women to

practice law in all the courts of the state and was a major landmark in the advancement of women’s rights in California.

In the summer of 1878, the Association again delegated the same four women to lobby for the insertion of a woman suffrage clause in the State Constitution, which was undergoing revision at a constitutional convention. Opposition was strong, and voting rights remained restricted to males only. However, Sarah and the other suffragists were able to incorporate a clause providing that “No person shall be debarred admission to any of the collegiate departments of the State University on account of sex.” This allowed women to attend the newly founded Hastings College of Law and was an obvious sequel to the Woman Lawyer Bill.

### **President Grant’s Visit**

It appears that the years 1869 through 1874 were probably the best in Sarah’s suffrage career. The town of Mayfield prospered and grew. Regnery wrote; “It became a shipping point for redwood lumber brought from the coastal mountains and for large quantities of grain produced on the various surrounding ranches.” The Wallis children were growing up, attending public school in Mayfield. The Wallises continued to entertain lavishly at their mansion. Local people characterized the social events, often with orchestra entertainment, as “great parties.” Elizabeth Peers, the local banker’s wife, long recalled in awe the fancy carriages carrying guests from San Francisco. She also remembered that the Wallises entertained ex-U.S. President Grant on his California tour in 1877, and for the occasion hired a large brass band. This must have been one of the high points of Sarah’s life, and it’s too bad that so little was written, or at any rate, preserved, of what happened that evening.

### **Mayfield Farm Sold—Wallises Build a Townhouse in Mayfield**

About 1875, the Wallis finances started to go sour. Sarah had apparently taken out a mortgage on the Farm to finance her suffrage activities and their lavish lifestyle. Some investments may have been totally lost in the national depression that destroyed many fortunes from 1875 through 1877. Once the Wallis financial and business investments were lost, the further loss of Mayfield Farm was probably inevitable. On May 6, 1878, she sold the farm and mansion to a San Francisco financier, Edward Barron for \$36,500 when it was probably worth \$100,000. It must

have been hard to leave the mansion she had built and they had lived in for 21 years.

The Wallises built a townhouse that same year, located on the northwest corner of First (now Birch) and Grant Streets, where the North County Courthouse now stands (the tiny park named for Sarah Wallis is on the next corner up towards El Camino—the northwest corner of Ash and Grant).

As Dorothy Regnery wrote; “They might be ‘down’ but they were not ‘out.’ Expense was not spared in creating a townhouse. It was obviously hard to abandon their accustomed life style. The elegant, one-story, highly elevated house gave an impression of dignity. The rooms of the house had fifteen foot high ceilings elaborately decorated with plaster rosettes from which hung the latest, exquisite lighting fixtures. There were several marble fire-place mantles. To the Mayfield populace the house was elaborate.” Perhaps piqued at being outshone by Sarah for the leading role in the community, Mrs. Elizabeth Peers (Alexander Peers’ wife) later recalled that everything Sarah had was bigger and better than anyone else. Please see the photo of the townhouse, taken in 1890. Regnery wrote: “The exterior wood trim was painted with a soft accent in blue-grey. The fenced yard was landscaped with a variety of unusual trees and shrubs.”

Although the townhouse was much smaller than the mansion, the number of family occupants increased. William, their fifth and final child, was still living at home and both daughters returned home without spouses, bringing three grandchildren.

After moving to their townhouse, the Wallises had to entertain in much less spectacular modes of entertainment. An example is cited in an April, 1887 newspaper account of a party; “A most enjoyable select reception was held at the residence of Judge and Mrs. J. S. Wallis on Tuesday evening. Mrs. Wallis, as well as the judge, has a faculty of making everybody happy, and their receptions and parties are always successful. Among those present were..(19 people were named). Ice cream and other refreshments were served in abundance. Various vocal and instrumental selections were creditably rendered by the Misses Weissnar, Miss Electra Orr, Mrs. Ingalls, and others.”

### **Sarah continues as Suffrage and Temperance Leader**

It was about this time in 1878, after five years of leading the movement in Califor-

nia, when Sarah was succeeded as President of the California Women’s Suffrage Educational Association by a man, J.J. Owen, Editor of the *San Jose Mercury*. However, in spite of the bad times and personal losses, Sarah kept working as a local suffrage and temperance leader. When meetings and social affairs demanded bigger rooms than her townhouse provided, there were public meeting rooms available.

Sarah became deeply involved, at the local level, in the temperance movement through membership in the Good Templars, a national organization founded in 1851 to promote temperance and peace with emphasis on personal abstinence from intoxicating drinks. The Mayfield Lodge was organized in 1869. Sarah must have been a long-time Templars member, as she transferred her membership from the San Francisco Lodge to the Mayfield Lodge in 1875, 18 years after leaving the city. Regnery notes that she was elected its Worthy Chief Templar and served in various active roles until she moved away from Mayfield.

During the 1880s and ‘90s, Sarah held many meetings on women’s issues in Mayfield, including her weekly “gospel meetings,” which include suffragist and temperance lectures, choral presentations and Christian sermons. Especially notable were the “grand Concerts” held approximately semi-annually from 1888 through 1892. Dorothy Regnery wrote; “In an attempt to stimulate awareness by local women and to encourage their cooperation in the women’s rights movement, Sarah expounded with evangelical zest. Declaring it was ‘work on behalf of the Master’, Sarah believed that the suffrage cause was tied with religion.” Such meetings, almost always including musical entertainment, also provided opportunity for Sarah’s numerous guests to express their viewpoints publically.

An 1890 newspaper report is representative of the routine weekly meetings: “MRS. WALLIS’ GOSPEL MEETING—a Large audience assembled in Odd Fellows’ Hall last Sunday evening to hear Mrs. Wallis, the evangelist, preach. The hall was beautifully decorated, and the singing of the choir was excellent. The subject Mrs. Wallis discussed was an interesting one, and she held the closest attention of her hearers. Mrs. Wallis will preach in the same place one week from tomorrow, Sunday evening.”

### **Ongoing Financial Troubles**

Financial problems continued to affect

the Wallises. In an effort to generate some funds, Sarah sold a portion of the house lot on the north side to the county. On it the county built a small wooden house, a “drunk tank,” to hold local inebriates overnight to avoid transporting them to San Jose.

The nation-wide “Cleveland Depression” of the mid-1890s (which brought the worst economic times between the 1840s and the Great Depression of the 20th Century) devoured the remainder of Sarah’s financial resources, and Sarah borrowed more from the local bank in the form of a mortgage against the townhouse—or perhaps it had been mortgaged from the start. Unfortunately for history, a fire in 1893 destroyed all local (Mayfield) civil records dating back to 1850, so we do not know any of the details of debts and property transfers.

### **Joseph’s Death—Sarah Moves to Los Gatos Cottage**

Joseph S. Wallis continued to support Sarah in her suffrage efforts but did not participate in the temperance movement. He also continued to be occupied with various legal matters on behalf of the family, defending his adopted son Talbot Wallis in 1883 against trumped-up charges of sexual employment discrimination in his job as State Librarian in Sacramento. He assisted one of his daughters in securing alimony and child support payments. The local newspapers noted several occasions when he was out of town on legal or other business.

Judge Wallis died at their Mayfield home on December 28, 1898 and was buried beside his son and son-in-law at the Union Cemetery in Redwood City. Sarah had the task of closing her husband’s affairs. She placed ads in the local papers calling for clients to pick up valuable legal papers and settle accounts, and for the sale of office furniture. Both ads were signed “Mrs J.S. Wallis,” apparently the first time she used this form of her name.

As mentioned before, Sarah and Joseph Wallis had borrowed heavily from Alexander Peers, Mayfield’s principle money lender. Peers considered that Sarah had squandered her wealth on the women’s rights movement. Following Joseph’s death, Peers foreclosed on Sarah’s remaining properties. Forced from her Mayfield townhouse, Sarah moved in 1899 to a cottage in Los Gatos purchased for her by her son Talbot Wallis.

## Sarah's Decline and Death

According to Regnery, Sarah's health was failing after her move to Los Gatos. From June, 1901 on, she was under constant doctor's care. "in contrast to her life's role of being on center stage, her last years were far from the whirl of activity and confrontation. The fact that she now had to live in 'straightened circumstances' appears to be a major cause why recognition of her earlier leadership has been ignored in contrast to lesser roles of wealthy wives like those of Senator Sargent and John Bidwell."

Perhaps one mitigating factor for Sarah was the fact that her recently widowed sister Caroline lived in the house next door to her. However, Caroline died in 1904. Sarah soon followed her in death on January 11, 1905. She was buried beside Joseph in Redwood City's Union Cemetery. The local newspaper obituary simply described Sarah as being "one of the prominent early pioneer women of California, who used her energy and perseverance toward bringing California into prominence." Other obituaries, even those in San Francisco a week later were silent about Sarah's outstanding contributions to women's rights. The scandals of her early marriages were ignored.

## Evaluation of Sarah Wallis in History

Regnery characterized Sarah's place in 19th-Century history thusly; "Persons not enthused with the concept of woman's rights routinely categorized female participants of the movement as being 'militants', 'progressive' and 'strong-minded females'." These same denigrating words were applied to Sarah Wallis in Bancroft's *Pioneer Register* (his ground-breaking history of California) in 1885. But at the same time, William F. White, Sarah's friend from the 1850s, without condemnation concluded that Sarah was "one of the most prominent women's rights advocates in California." In 1887 Elizabeth Cady Stanton assessed Sarah's role as being "untiring in her efforts to advance the interests of women. Mrs. Wallis has been able to accomplish great good for her sex." But having given a major part of her wealth and devoted her later life to the suffrage movement, Sarah Wallis' significant role was badly neglected by 20th Century historians. Much of the reason for this may be because she died in relative poverty and obscurity, and before her efforts came to fruition. The Woman's Suffrage Bill passed in California in 1911, six years after she died. Another nine years later, in 1920, the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was finally ratified.



Wallis townhouse in Mayfield, May 18, 1890

## The State Historical Marker

I wonder how many Barron Park residents know that the site of Sarah's lovely mansion, the foundation of our neighborhood, has been memorialized with a permanent state historical marker, Number 969, entitled "Homesite of Sarah Wallis—Mayfield Farm." The text reads "Sarah Armstrong Wallis (1825–1905) was a pioneer in the campaign for women's voting rights. In 1870 she was elected President of California's first statewide suffrage organization which in 1873 incorporated as the California State Woman Suffrage Education Association. The home she built on this site, Mayfield Farm was a center of suffrage activities attracting state and national leaders such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Ulysses S. Grant."

Jeanne McDonnell, President of the Women's Heritage Museum of Palo Alto, and their consultant historian Dorothy Regnery authored the application to the state for the marker and the application to the city for an easement and building permit. Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian, and John Joynt, Barron Park Association President, assisted by obtaining permission for the monument placement from the two landowners involved. They also arranged a block closure on La Selva Drive and organized the party for the dedication of the marker site.

The marker was dedicated on Saturday, September 11, 1986, one day after the 75th anniversary of women's suffrage in California, in a program and party presided over by Jeanne McDonnell and attended by about 200 people, mostly Women's Heritage Museum and Palo Alto Historical Association members and Barron park residents. I think Sarah would have smiled in delight if she had known that her life was to be celebrated at a neighborhood party.

Kathleen Donnelly, in covering the installation and dedication of the historical marker for *The Palo Alto Weekly*, noted that, "although Sarah Wallis was there first, the neighborhood that grew out of her farmland was named for the man who came after her, Edward Barron." "And that," Jeanne McDonnell said with an ironic smile playing around her lips, "is the fate of women in history."

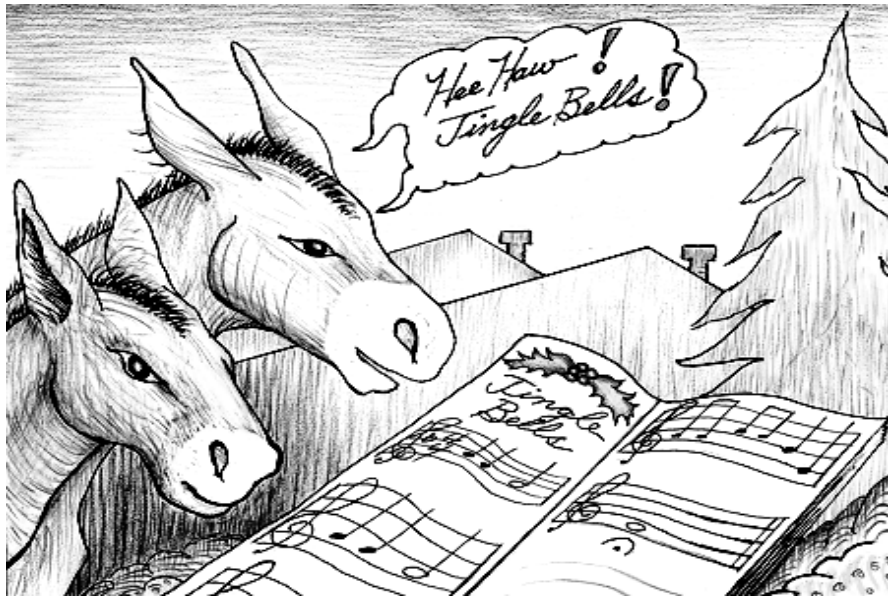
## Conclusion

This concludes the story of Sarah Wallis, who was certainly one of the most significant people to have lived on our land. If you would like more information, or have information to contribute, please don't hesitate to contact me at 650-493-0689 or [dgrahampaca@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dgrahampaca@sbcglobal.net). There is no known photograph of Sarah extant, and it is my hope that someday, some descendant of hers will come forward with one.

\* **EIGHTH ANNUAL** \*

# Barron Park Neighborhood Holiday Party and Donkey Parade

*Featuring the Gunn High School Chamber Singers*



Pericles (Perry) and Miner 49er (Niner), the Barron Park community donkeys

Say hello to Perry and 'Niner—Stroll through our neighborhood!  
Sing seasonal favorites! Bring your kids and animals!

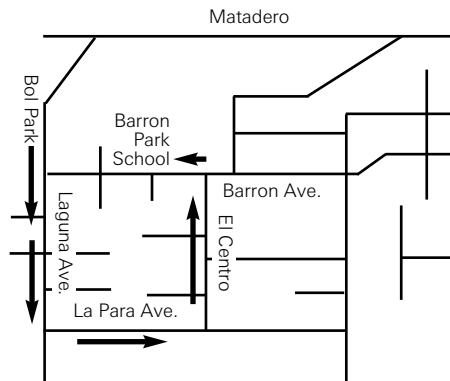
Saturday, December 15th

Parade: 2:30 pm Bol Park – Rain or Shine!

Party: 3:15 pm (Approx.) Barron Park Elementary School

## Parade Route:

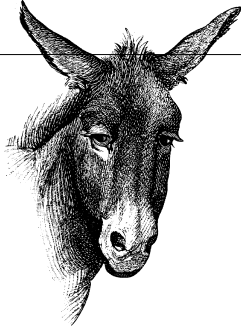
Meet at Bol Park 2:30 pm  
Leave Bol Park 2:45 pm  
Laguna to La Para  
La Para to El Centro  
El Centro to Barron  
Barron to Barron Park School



Refreshments and singing at  
Barron Park Elementary School  
Multi Purpose Room 3:15 pm  
(If you can bring goodies for the  
party, please call Alice Frost  
at 493-8272)



# Help Support the Barron Park Donkeys!



Support for Perry and Niner comes completely from the generosity of their neighbors and the community. The donkeys receive no tax dollars, no government funds, no funds from the City of Palo Alto, no grants from any animal welfare or humane organization. They are a part of the neighborhood simply because people who live here care about them and care about continuing this unique opportunity. In return, Perry and Niner provide warmth and joy to those who walk by their pasture; a rural equine experience for suburban children and adults who visit them on Sundays in Bol Park; an opportunity for humane education for children in Barron Park Schools; and a general reaffirmation for all of us of our connection to the natural world.

General farrier and veterinary expenses for the donkeys total about \$1,000 a year. Food costs about \$600 a year. Funds for the donkeys are managed by Acterra (formerly the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation), which acts as fiscal agent for the Donkey Project, providing insurance

and handling donations and financial affairs. Fees for these administrative services totaled about \$200 this past year. All of these expenses are funded solely through donations.

All those who care about Perry and Niner seek to guarantee their proper on-going care and shelter, as well as to ensure that assets will be available for health concerns as the donkeys age. The handlers hope that those generous neighbors who have contributed in the past will consider increasing their support this year. Contributions for the donkey's 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).

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

By Lydia Kou, Chair

Let's change the role of residents from victims to participants and resources during a disaster. We can better help each other by working together. At this time, we have an opportunity to create and implement the Block Coordinator system. The best time to prepare for an emergency is before it happens.

During a major emergency, such as a natural disaster, we as citizens may have to fend for ourselves until the City's resources arrive. For instance, in a major disaster, it might be at least three (3) days before vital services are restored, if not more! Scary thought? It does not have to be. This is where organization and planning comes in. The Barron Park Association Emergency Preparedness Committee

is looking to:

- 1) Develop standards (best practices), as some of the other neighboring cities have developed.
- 2) Prepare neighbor-to-neighbor, block-to-block.
- 3) Determine individuals who have special needs—elderly, disabled, children, etc.
- 4) Decide how to communicate up the line, as well as receive information down the line.

To achieve this, we are recruiting Block Coordinators. As a Block Coordinator, you will:

- 1) Interact with residents of the block. Meet your neighbors

Plan an event once a year

Build a kit

Use your own ideas and creativity

2) Serve as a communication node for the block.

Distribute information from the neighborhood and the City

Create a neighborhood list for use in activity planning and emergencies, provide each neighbor with the list.

3) Interact with the neighborhood.

Coordinate and communicate with Disaster/Emergency Preparedness Committee Chair for the neighborhood

4) Report the conditions of your block during an emergency.

Communication node for Emergency/Disaster

If you are interested in being a part of the Barron Park Block Coordinator program, contact me today. (650) 996-0028 or [lkou@apr.com](mailto:lkou@apr.com)

All HAMs, please contact me so that I can put together a list. Please identify if you are PANDA. My contact info: [lkou@apr.com](mailto:lkou@apr.com)

### FOR MEMBERS ONLY!

We have created PDF files of past newsletters. See the complete newsletters, including full-color photos! These files are available **ONLY** to current BPA members.

The directory address will change each year. The new address will be published in the Summer edition. The files may take awhile to download (file sizes given).

We will furnish the yearly directory address change on our Online Membership Form receipt, as well as in the Summer edition of our newsletter.

You need to be a member of the Barron Park Association to receive the Summer edition, as well as the Fall and Winter editions. The Spring edition is mailed to all households in Barron Park. That's when we ask for new and renewed membership.

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

# Curves

4117 El Camino Real Palo Alto

**650-320-8364**

**Barron Park Residents**

**Mention this Ad and  
Receive One Month Free**

Expires Sept. 30, 2007  
New Members Only

## Driftwood Deli & Market

- Sandwiches - Fresh bread -
  - Dairy - Groceries - Magazines -
  - Liquor - Catering - Indoor and  
- outdoor seating -
  - Homemade soup & salads -
- Mon.-Fri. 8 am to 8 pm, Sat. 10 am to 7 pm  
**Buy 2 sandwiches—get 3rd one FREE- exp. 11/30**

**3450 El Camino Real**

Palo Alto, CA 94306 (near Creekside Inn)

**Phone: (650) 493-4162**

**Fax: (650) 493-4171**

## NEW HOMES FOR SALE

*"Barron Park forever.  
Long live Barron Park"*



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## KATHY HAIR DESIGN

### Ask for Seniors Special

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3535 El Camino Real  
Palo Alto, CA 94306



## Grand Opening

**Alma Shoe Repair & U.S. Post Office**

3666B El Camino Real

(Next to Maytag) Look for the American flag.

**PARKING IN THE REAR**

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER  
FALL 2007



www.bpaonline.org  
4028 Laguna Way  
Palo Alto, California 94306

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