

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Doug Moran, BPA President

E-mail lists

The BPA e-mail lists are an important part of what the BPA does. They are open to everyone, not just members. For those already on the e-mail lists, please read the article in this issue on confirming your subscription to those lists. This issue also contains information for new subscribers.

The BPA e-mail lists are highly regarded by people in other neighborhoods, some of whom subscribe to our lists so that they can "borrow" items relevant to their areas (and I occasionally "borrow" from them).

Volunteering

I would like to encourage people to consider taking a more active role in the BPA: There is room for participation at many levels. Many of the current leadership became involved through a particular issue or event and, encouraged by the satisfaction of seeing their efforts have positive impacts, continued and broadened that involvement.

That being said, we have a problem. Although membership is at an all-time high and people are volunteering to help with individual events, not enough of those people are moving up into leadership positions.

We just lost our Membership Chair, and at the worst possible time—just as we are moving into our annual membership drive. This person maintains the database that

generates the mailing labels for these newsletters. Each year, about 20% of the households that have been members for multiple years forget to send in their renewal without a second reminder.

This year we almost canceled the May Fete because, although we had enough volunteers to handle the various subtasks, we didn't have anyone to handle overall leadership for the event. Barely two weeks short of the absolute drop-dead date, two volunteers stepped forward: Jeannie Lythcott and Julie Lythcott-Haims (mother and daughter).

During the 1990's, the membership of the Board of Directors hovered around 16, and at one point we were worried that it might grow to the point of being unwieldy. Today, the Board is down to 10 members, which I view as too low to adequately deal with the inevitable problems—jobs suddenly sucking up time previously put in civic affairs, people moving from the area, personal and family crises—plus normal turnover.

For more information on how the BPA operates, please see this column in the Spring 2002 and Summer 2002 issues of this newsletter, available on the web at www2.bpaonline.org/BP-News.

Improving information to and from the Police and Fire Departments

The BPA has long been in the forefront on working with the Police Department and

the Fire Department. Barron Park had one of the strongest Neighborhood Watch Programs, until the program was abolished in the late 1990s when a new police chief decided that those resources were best used elsewhere.

BPA Board members Art Bayce and Katie Edwards (both deceased) were driving forces behind City activities in Emergency Preparedness in the 1980s and 1990s. Art, Katie, Inge Harding-Barlow and others played critical roles in organizing two Emergency Preparedness drills in Barron Park that revealed numerous flaws in the assumptions by the Police and Fire Departments.

After the report last spring of a mountain lion in Bol Park, Patrick Muffler, the current BPA Emergency Prep Committee chair, collected and analyzed information about the performance of the City's automated telephone alert system (TeleMinder). Although this revealed substantial problems, neither the City nor the other neighborhoods have attempted a similar evaluation of this system after subsequent activations (again for mountain lion sightings).

Prompted by the failings and limitations of the alerting system, Patrick and I, along with several leaders from other neighborhoods, have been pressing the Police Department to re-examine not just the current system, but their philosophy, of communication with residents. More on this can be found in a separate article in this newsletter.

The BPA is a major participant in this effort partly because of our experience with what can be done and partly because we have higher expectations about what should be done.

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How to Build Community

Barron Park Donkey Parade and Holiday Party a Big Hit!

By Don Anderson

Saturday, December 18 marked the fifth annual Barron Park Holiday Party and Donkey Parade. It was a very successful enterprise; there were more than 350 participants, including kids, parents, and seniors. There were also many dogs, bikes, scooters, wagons, and skateboards involved, in addition to the Gunn High School Chamber Singers, and two donkeys. At the head of this year's parade was a giant electric tricycle, which was much in demand by the younger set for free rides.

The caroling parade through Barron Park was conducted in beautiful weather, a welcome change from last year's driving rainstorm. Things got started when all concerned had the chance to see Perry and Niner, the Barron Park donkeys, up close and personal in Bol Park. Then came a procession from Bol Park through the neighborhood, featuring caroling led by director William Liberatore and the Gunn Chamber Singers. At the parade's end there were refreshments served at the Barron Park Elementary School, and a wonderful performance by the Gunn Chamber Singers. Refreshments included home baked cookies provided by members of the Barron Park Seniors group.



Bob Schneeveiss provided and drove the giant tricycle that led the parade.

This was truly a community event! Special thanks are due Alice Frost, who organized the cookie baking efforts (and baked several dozen cookies herself), and to cookie bakers Patty Eldridge, Rosemary Jacobsen, Mary Jane Leon, Gwen Luce, Sheila Mandoli, Joan McDonnell, Jean Olsen, Julie Spengler, Barbara Johnson, Barbara Stark, and Virginia January. When we saw that the crowd was more than double the size of last year's, Jean Lythcott made a life-saving last minute run to the market for several dozen more cookies, which she generously donated. Gwen Luce provided several gallons of delicious hot mulled cider, and set up A-frame signs throughout the neighborhood publicizing the event ahead of time.

Thanks also to Alice Frost, Will Beckett, Jean Lythcott, and Boy Scout Troop 52 and its adult leaders Jeanne Chisholm and Ken Poulton for major league help with party setup and cleanup. Troop 52 also managed traffic during the parade; a special thanks to Troop 52 scout David Hill, who was very helpful loading small children on and off of the giant tricycle. Bob Schneeveiss provided and piloted the tricycle; Starbucks donated hot coffee.

Appreciation is due Inge Harding-Barlow, Eric Struck, Zakhary Cribari, Ellen Whitmore, and Jim Bronson for taking care of Niner and Perry before and after the parade, and to Edith Smith for running the t-shirt concession during the party. Last but not least, thanks to Jon Deline, Mary Jane Leon, and Patrick Muffler for the photos accompanying this article.



Neighborhood children had a chance to meet our donkeys at Bol Park before the event.



Some people had it easy.

The December 20 Barron Park parade and party really went well, and a major reason was the participation of Director Bill Liberatore's Gunn High School Chamber Singers. The Gunn choir is making a trip in May to a competition in Vancouver, British Columbia. The package deal of airfare, room, meals, etc. costs each family nearly \$1,000. Although we sometimes lose sight of the fact, there are many families in Palo Alto who can't afford this kind of money. Bill has been looking for individuals or local businesses that can make a contribution, large or small, to help fund scholarships for those unable to afford the trip. Anyone who can help should send a check made out to "Gunn Choir Boosters," addressed to Bill Liberatore, Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Thanks!



Delicious cookies were baked by the Barron Park Seniors.



Entertainment at the party was provided by the Gunn High School Chamber Singers.



Gunn Choir Director Bill Liberatore (left) and event organizer Don Anderson.

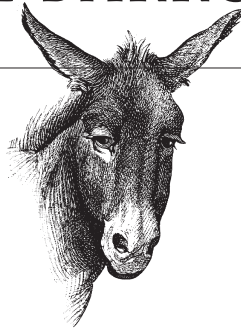


Gwen Luce donated and served up tasty hot cider.



The appreciative audience filled the multipurpose room at Barron Park Elementary School.

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," "ACTERRA" 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 Don Anderson at 494-8672 or email at don@donanderson.us.

KIDS KORNER—Family Fun at the Juana Run

By Linda Lui



Volunteers register the runners.

Amid days of rain and cold, we were blessed with terrific running weather for one of the best community events of the year, the annual Juana Run. This year was extra special in the feeding-the-tummy department, with a pancake breakfast for the 8K runners and delicious hot-off-the-grill cheese burgers, teriyaki chicken and French fries for sale after the race, with all of the proceeds going to the Juana Run. This event raises much needed funds for our two neighborhood elementary schools—Juana Briones and Barron Park. Many thanks to Karen and Amol Saxena and family, the founders of this event, for making it possible. Hats off to all of the wonderful sponsors and hard-working volunteers for making it happen.

The day started at 8:30am with the 8K race. The kid races started at 10:00am with fifth grade boys running a half-mile, then the fifth grade girls, then the fourth grade



Kinders run the quarter mile.

boys, all the way down to the pre-kindergartners at 11:00am, trotting their 200 yards. The final race was a certified 1-mile race, a great way to let the parents and kids participate together. Since Matthew was tuckered out from his earlier race, I had the unique experience of being among the last group of runners as two motorcycled policemen shepherded the laggards along Los Robles with a loud-speakered motivational monologue. “Pick it up now.... C’mon, you can do better than that....Do you know how hard it is to ride this slow?” Bystanders were snickering. As we neared the corner into Orme Street, the unthinkable happened; the peo-



Pancake breakfast for 8K runners.

ple behind us passed by and we became dead last! The story of Ping flashed through my brain. Before we made the turn I caught a glimpse of a police car ahead of us with a line of cars waiting on the other side. Waiting for us! How many five-year-olds and their mothers have police cars with flashing lights holding up traffic for them? An awesome feeling. Next year, it’s your turn.

The awards ceremony immediately followed our fifteen minutes of shame. The top placers of each division of the kids’ races selected a toy or book and bib numbers were pulled and called out for raffle prizes. Many of the would be winners were not present or had thrown away their child’s bib when they were re-bibbed for the mile race, so next year, remember



Some runners got dog tired.

to show up and don’t throw out your bibs so soon.

This was possibly our best experience at this event. In past years, we’ve been late and harried. In fact, in our first year attempting the Juana Run, we couldn’t even find the race. We arrived early and waited patiently for the crowds to gather at Juana Briones Park. At some point, it dawned on us that no crowd was gathering and no race was taking place anywhere in the park. By the time we got Alex to the starting line, he had already run a half-mile and was still trying to catch his breath when his race began. Then two years later his shoe fell off and he ran the entire race with only one shoe. Last year we mistakenly sent him in with the wrong grade level. With parents like us, it’s hard being the firstborn. This year we managed to get everyone in the right place at the right time with the proper footwear. Luckily, we have two other kids to benefit from all this training.



Awards ceremony in the Juana Briones multipurpose room.

ZONING AND LAND USE UPDATE—SPRING 2005

By Maryanne Welton

During the last year, the major development activity in Barron Park was focused on these projects:

4131 El Camino

A Starbucks coffee shop and Subway sandwich shop opened this year in the new three-story, mixed use building on the El Camino Island. After more than 5 years of meetings and discussions with the developer, this new neighborhood-serving retail provides a popular meeting spot for the community. This type of new development is why the BPA works with the City and developers on proposed projects in our community to encourage that neighborhood needs are addressed.

Old Blockbuster Site (El Camino and Vista Way)

The Emek Beracha congregation purchased the property and received a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to renovate the existing

building into a synagogue. The CUP outlined hours of use and proposed ways to mitigate impacts on the neighborhood. During a community meeting to review the congregation's proposal, neighbors were supportive of the project and asked that the congregation work with the community on ways to slow traffic nearby to increase pedestrian safety.

797 Matadero Subdivision

Plans were submitted for a subdivision of five new lots for new houses, where currently three lots and two houses exist. Several neighborhood meetings have been held to review this project during the last several years. Nearby neighbors were concerned about privacy, protection of heritage oaks and the creek habitat, and whether the new houses would be compatible with the neighborhood. The Planning Commission and City Council agreed and rejected the project. New plans have recently been

submitted for four lots.

Albertsons at Alma Plaza

The Albertsons property has been sold to a local developer and the grocery store is slated for closure at the end of March. Plans for the site are not known at this time. The loss of Albertsons will leave a big hole in our neighborhood's shopping options if the redevelopment of the site does not include a new grocery store.

Ricky's Hyatt (at El Camino and Charleston)

The hotel will close and housing will be built in its place. A new application was submitted to the City for 200 residential units last summer. While the housing is considered by many a positive addition to Palo Alto's housing stock, the projected loss of revenue from the hotel's transient occupancy tax will impact the City's budget.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION E-MAIL LISTS

By Doug Moran

Membership Confirmation

It is easy to lose track of what e-mail lists you are subscribed to and under what address. It is not uncommon to inadvertently drop off a list because you subscribed under a former address and messages are no longer being forwarded from there to your new address. As list maintainer, I try to identify the resident associated with a dead email account and notify them, but it is often hard to do because the login names are too disconnected from real names.

To deal with this problem, it is a common practice to send out periodic reminders. The BPA does this annually in conjunction with this issue of the newsletter. Shortly before this issue is expected to arrive in your mail box, a message is sent to each member of each mailing list confirming their membership on that list. For example,

if you are subscribed to each of bpa-news, bpa and bpa-misc, you will receive three messages, one for each list. If you have not received a message for a list that you thought that you were subscribed to, please resubscribe.

The BPA Lists

To review the purposes of the various BPA e-mail lists, go to <http://www.bpaonline.org> and click on the button BPA Email Lists. Note: These lists reject long messages—currently anything over 20,000 characters—as a means to block a large class of SPAM messages. However, you can run afoul this limit if you attach a photo or if you compose a message with various fonts. See the above page for more detail.

SPAM and AOL

From time to time, the AOL SPAM filters decide to block e-mail from the BPA lists. I

have no similar problems with any other ISP (Internet Service Provider). For an overview of these problems, visit <http://www.dougmoran.com/Admin/aol-problem-overview.html>

Request: If a piece of SPAM slips through the SPAM filters for the BPA lists, please do NOT click the button for "This is SPAM" because a few instances of this may blacklist all of the BPA lists for yourself, and possibly for all customers of your ISP (I say "may" because it is extremely difficult to find out even roughly why a site gets blacklisted). This situation occurs because SPAMmers routinely forge the address for the origin of the message, and one trick is to list the originator as simply relaying the message from an uninvolved third party. Hence, ISPs cannot distinguish actual relays (such as the BPA lists) from SPAMmers using this trick.

The Briones House—Legacy and Landmark

By Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian

Our Heritage is Under Threat

The house that Palo Alto pioneer Juana Briones built more than 150 years ago may fall to the wrecker's ball three years from now, unless it can be purchased by the Juana Briones Heritage Foundation and preserved for our future. Briones bought the 4,400-acre Rancho Purissima Concepcion in 1844 and soon erected a large three-room house on a knoll with a commanding view of the Santa Clara Valley and San Francisco Bay. Today, all that is left is a deteriorating, part "adobe" house on an acre and a half at 4155 Old Adobe Road in the Palo Alto Hills. This house is the oldest in Palo Alto, and indeed, the only remaining structure from the Mexican era in northwest Santa Clara County.

Who Was Juana Briones?



There are no known pictures of Juana Briones; this is an artist's conception, based on a description and a picture of a niece.

Juana Briones was an extraordinary woman of her culture for the times in which she lived. At the time she purchased Rancho la Purissima Concepcion from it's Native American grantee owners for \$300, she was locally famous in Yerba Buena, the vil-

lage that was to become San Francisco in 1846. She was described as being very tall for a woman, buxom and fair-complexioned, with her hair parted in the middle. She was independent and ambitious, an excellent businesswoman and a compassionate helper and healer. Her commanding personality can be glimpsed in the many comments written about her by visitors to California (neither she nor her children were literate—very few Californios of their generations were). She learned herbal medicine and was regularly sought out to treat the ailments of travelers and neighbors, as there were no doctors or hospitals. Local Native Americans held her in reverence and awe and called her to the bedsides of serious cases. She was much sought after as a midwife. She aided runaway sailors who "jumped ship" in Yerba Buena, devel-

oping life-long friendships with some.

Juana was born about 1796 in Monterey or Carmel and was the first European child to be born in that vicinity, according to family tradition. Her family moved to Santa Clara Mission and then to the Presidio of San Francisco, with her parents participating in the founding of both San Jose and San Francisco. Juana grew up in their house at Polin Spring on the presidio grounds, where a Stanford archeological team is currently excavating an adobe structure believed to be the Briones family home. In 1819 or 1820 she married Apolinario Miranda, the Lieutenant of Cavalry at the post. During their stormy 27-year marriage, seven children were born.

The Second or Third Settler in Yerba Buena

Juana moved out of Miranda's house in 1835 or 1836, pioneering a plot of ground in North Beach near the present corner of Powell and Filbert Streets. She did well in farming and ranching, and apparently did some tailoring, too. She was one of the first two or three settlers outside of the Presidio or the Mission Dolores, and thus qualifies as the one of first residents of the Pueblo of Yerba Buena. She raised vegetables and maintained dairy cattle that grazed on the slopes of Telegraph Hill. The area was known as "La Playa de Juana Briones" (Juana Briones' Beach) before it became known as North Beach. A state historic marker on Washington Square acknowledges her contributions to early San Francisco history.

She soon became well-known as "the Widow Briones," and was very popular for her aid to the sick and homeless. Thus, when more trouble with her abusive husband arose in 1842 and 1843, she prevailed with the Alcalde (Justice of the Peace), and Apolinario was ordered to leave her alone. At one point his property was seized for "not living harmoniously with his wife." In another hearing he was referred to as "Senora Briones' husband."

Gaiety and hospitality marked Juana's home. One American Sailor described a party during pre-Lenten Carnival in 1841, when he called upon Juana's nineteen-year-old daughter Presentacion, a sprightly and pretty girl. They played a game trying to break eggshells filled with confetti or tinsel on each other's heads, but Presentacion was

too skillful and quick for him.

The Briones de Miranda family was still living in Yerba Buena in 1846 when the U. S. Navy raised the American flag over the Alcaaldia (City Hall) and one of her daughters was present at the ceremony marking the American conquest. Soon after that, Juana took the children on horseback and loaded their furniture and possessions on oxcarts for the three-day journey to their new home on the rancho.

Why is Juana Briones important to Barron Park?

Juana Briones has been honored by the naming of one each of the two parks and the two schools in the Barron Park neighborhood. Although our land was not actually part of her rancho, her name is one of the most prominent in our historical heritage. Many of our children have enjoyed the hands-on experience of field trips to the house during the period when it was open to public tours from 1988 through 1993 during the Berthiaume ownership.



Polly Marion's fourth grade class on a field trip from Juana Briones Elementary School, about 1988.

The Old House is Still Standing

Part of Juana's "adobe" ranch house is believed to be incorporated into the present-day "Briones Adobe" on the knoll at 4155 Old Trace Road, just off Arastradero Road in the Palo Alto Hills. The house, much of which was built in the Twentieth Century, includes a portion built of "encajando" construction, with large redwood corner posts and walls of tamped adobe soil between rough-split redwood slats. It is one of only two houses built in this unique manner that are known to remain in California. It was built in 1846 or 1847 and was the main house on the rancho. When it was built, there was no other building in this end of



This photograph, from 1903, shows the tamped earth between redwood slats.

the county except for a few temporary herder's huts. It is the oldest surviving structure this side of Santa Clara Mission.

Juana lived there with her family, on her hilltop above a spring area (one of the sources of Barron Creek) until 1885 when she moved to a small house at the corner of Washington (now Oregon Expressway) and Birch in Mayfield. She died in Mayfield in 1889 at the age of 94.



This 1903 photograph shows the house less than 20 years after Juana moved from it.

The ranch house and 40 surrounding acres were sold in 1900 to Charles Nott, a Stanford botanist, who renovated it, added two wings, and lived there until 1925. The next owners were the Eaton-Cox family, who finished the second floor and brought in electricity. Marjorie Eaton willed the property to her grandniece Susan Bethiaume, who held and protected the property until 1993. Unfortunately, the house, including the packed-adobe portion, was badly damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

The Present Owners Want to Demolish the House

Bethiaume sold to neurosurgeon Dan Maub, who lived there until moving his family out in October, 1996. Allegedly, during Maub's occupation, illegal modifications were made to the house, mostly to the 1910-era wings. Since 1988, the property has been covered by the Mills Act, which has preserved the historic building in exchange for a 75% reduction in property taxes. The current owners want to sell the property and

have tried to obtain a demolition permit to facilitate the sale. The Juana Briones Heritage Foundation, Palo Alto Stanford Heritage (PAST) and the City's Historic Resources Board have all been involved in trying to assure continuing preservation of this unique house.

What is the threat to the house?

The owners of the house have petitioned the City of Palo Alto for a demolition permit: the outcome of the ensuing litigation between the City and the owners is still pending. They do not live in the house and the vacant conditions are accelerating deterioration. The home's protection under a Historic Property Preservation Agreement expires in January, 2008—less than three years from now!

What is the Juana Briones Heritage Foundation?

The Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, formed in 1999 with the mission to acquire and restore Juan Briones' House as a living history program. It is a coalition of historians, preservation architects, attorneys, educators and community leaders committed to developing an outstanding living history program that will respect the lovely residential setting in the foothills.

What is the Foundation Doing?

Near term goals are to (1) reach a purchase agreement with the owners, and (2) raise the financial resources to acquire the property.

If a purchase agreement can be in place prior to December 2005, the Foundation can apply to the California Cultural & Historic Endowment (CCHE) for a matching grant (limited to the funds raised by December).

Once the property is acquired, the focus will shift to;

- Restoring the historic architectural form which was built using a rammed earth technique.
- Restoring and furnish the core adobe dwelling to the Mexican Rancho period.
- Restoring additions to the house to reflect the continuity and change of California history.
- Repairing damages from the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.
- Restoring the grounds with native plants, a vegetable garden and fruit trees.

Once the property is restored, the Foundation's next step will be to create a program that moves beyond the pages of his-

tory books;

- Children will experience 19th century living in Mexican-California: grinding corn, dressing in period costumes, eating hand-made tortillas, designing cattle brands and building with adobe clay. Teachers will receive curriculum materials in connection with classroom visits.

- Restored grounds will showcase the agricultural and medicinal value of native California plants in Native American and Mexican cultures.

- An archive library will spotlight scholarship to share the important place of women in history, the contributions of Afro-Mexicans in early settlements and the complex interactions between Native Americans and colonial people.

- Docents will narrate the stories of the home's many occupants, describe architecture and earthen building techniques, and share the traditions, culture and art of Mexican California.

- The Foundation will seek partnerships with educational institutions to establish a scholar in residence.

How Can You Help?

Join with others today—add your voice so this legacy landmark is not demolished. Show your support of the Foundation's mission by signing the endorsement on the website: www.brioneshouse.org.

Make a tax-deductible donation and contribute to creating a lasting living history program. Mail to JBHF, 1685 Mariposa Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Include your mailing address so a receipt can be provided to you.

Volunteer. Partner with committed, energetic Bay Area community members. Share your expertise in grant writing, fundraising, publicity, filmmaking, and information management. Please contact: chair@brioneshouse.org.



This shows the west side in 1963—there have been no major changes since, except for vegetation growing up.

Emergency Preparedness—A Reminder

By Patrick Muffler

In this spring newsletter that goes to all residents of Barron Park, I think it is useful to give an overview of emergency preparedness. To those of you who have read my past articles (see newsletter archives at <http://www2.bpaonline.org/BP-News/index.html>), my apologies for the repetition. But perhaps this review will be a helpful refresher.

The four major types of disasters relevant to Barron Park are floods, toxic spills, terrorism and earthquakes. Of these, a major earthquake is the most important because damage will be great, because it will seriously affect the entire Bay Area, not just a local community, and because it is likely to occur here in the not-too-distant future. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that there is a 62% chance of a magnitude 6.7 or greater earthquake striking the San Francisco Bay region before 2032 (see <http://quake.usgs.gov/research/seismology/wg02/>). Such an earthquake, regardless of whether its epicenter is on the San Andreas Fault, the Hayward Fault, or another related fault, will cause major damage throughout the Bay Area. We live in a bayside, urban environment similar to that of Kobe, Japan, which in 1995 experienced a magnitude 6.9 earthquake that killed 6,000 people and caused over \$100 billion in damage.

In a major earthquake, Barron Park will experience moderate to severe structural damage to residences, a number of injuries, absence of electricity and gas, and disrupted water supply (remember that the Hetch Hetchy water pipeline, which supplies our water, crosses the Hayward Fault!). Government resources will be overwhelmed, and fire and police departments will have to give priority to major, critical facilities such as hospitals. The Palo Alto Neighborhood Disaster Activity (<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/oes/panda>) will supplement city resources, but these volunteer personnel also will be severely taxed in the first phases of a major disaster. Indeed, their first obligation must be to their own families and residences.

The bottom line is that each household in Barron Park will be on its own after a major disaster and should be prepared to provide for its basic needs for several days to a week. We all need to have sufficient emergency supplies to tide us over until outside

assistance becomes available and water, electricity and gas are restored. Excellent guidelines for building emergency caches are presented in the 3rd edition of "Living with our faults" (<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/oes/earthquake/>). Comprehensive disaster preparedness kits are sold by the Palo Alto Chapter of the American Red Cross (http://www.paarc.org/supplies/cat_disaster.htm).

Drinking water will be particularly critical. A person can survive for weeks with minimal food, but only a few days without water. Certainly local, State, and Federal governments will do their best to supply emergency water for drinking and cooking. But these emergency measures will almost certainly take several days to a week to implement. Consequently, each household should take stock of its emergency water sources and be prepared to survive for up to a week without water from any outside source. Guidelines for emergency water are summarized in the Summer 2003 issue of the Barron Park Newsletter (<http://www2.bpaonline.org/BP-News/2003-summer/index.html>).

Finally, let's not forget that many of us spend many hours per day away from home and that getting home in the aftermath of a major earthquake is going to be exceedingly difficult. Even if roads and bridges are only lightly damaged, non-functioning traffic lights will produce instant gridlock, as in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. The remedy here is obvious: carry an emergency kit in your car. Specific suggestions for such a kit can be found in the Fall 2003 issue of the Barron Park Newsletter (<http://www2.bpaonline.org/BP-News/2003-fall/index.html>).

I know that some Barron Park households are well-prepared for a disaster, but I suspect that the great majority (80%?) are not. In the days after a disaster, with water, electricity and gas unavailable, what will this 80% do for the basics of existence? Can this 80% count on the good will of their prepared neighbors, thus reducing their neighbors' preparedness from one week to just a day or two? I would like to think that our community spirit will allow us to muddle through, somehow. But I would worry a lot less if 20% of our households were unprepared rather than 80%. It's up to each of you.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doug Moran, President

Maryanne Welton, Vice President

Christian Kalar, Secretary

Mary Jane Leon, Treasurer

Will Beckett

Douglas Graham

Nancy Hamilton

John King

Gwen Luce

Patrick Muffler



Committee / Activity Chairs

Beautification: Vacant

Neighborhood Businesses Liaison: Vacant

Creeks/Flood Control: Christian Kalar

Neighborhood Safety & Preparedness:

Patrick Muffler

May Fete: Vacant

History: Doug Graham

Membership: Vacant

Natural Habitat & Environment:

Jill Beckett / Inge Harding-Barlow /

Doug Moran

Newsletter: Nancy Hamilton

Parks: Doug Graham

School Liaison: Vacant

Seniors: Mary Jane Leon

Traffic & Streets: John King

Zoning & Land Use: Maryanne Welton

Welcoming: Gwen Luce



BPA meetings are held the 3rd

Tuesday of every month at 7:15 p.m.
Call Doug Moran for location: 856-3302
<http://www.bpaonline.org>

SENIOR UPDATE, SPRING 2005

By Mary Jane Leon

Big Band Music

Big Band Music from the 30's, 40's, and 50's is alive and well right here in our back yard—or front yard, depending on your perspective. I'm referring to Spangenberg Theater and Peninsula Pops Orchestra, conducted by Barron Park's own Kim Venaas.

Where have I been all these years? Out to lunch, for sure. And if some kind soul had not put a notice of a recent concert up on the bpa-misc email, we still wouldn't know about the best Swing sounds around. The concert, on February 20, was sold out, as well it deserved to be. The musicians are professional quality, and Kim is the perfect combination conductor and MC.

Their next scheduled offering, April 10 at 3:00 p.m. at Spangenberg Theatre, will be a live radio broadcast (remember when bands used to do that?) for the big band station KCEA at 89.1 on the FM dial. The best radio station around. Get there early, as it is bound to be a sell out.

Mr. Venaas has another event in the planning stages: a showing of the documentary movie "Swing" about his Black Tie Jazz Orchestra, combined with a concert. No date set yet, but sounds like a dynamite idea.

You can get on their email list by going to www.peninsulapops.com, or get announcements through regular mail if you write to Peninsula Pops Orchestra, 3790 El Camino Real, Suite 341, Palo Alto, Ca. 94306.

We will publish announcements as we get them to our Seniors email list. To get on that list, see the end of this column.

May Fete

May Fete is alive and well, after a near collapse, so mark May 22 on your calendar. Lot's of activities, food, music, and the May Pole. There will be a Seniors Canopy, with comfy chairs, so you can sit in the shade, chat a bit, and catch your breath. Please plan to drop by.

Computers Available Close By

Free training, too. Well, they would like a

donation, but since this is sponsored by the YMCA, you know your donation would be in good hands.

There is a wonderful room in the Ventura Community Center full of computers, tables, chairs, and helpful people, Pari Natarajan and Corey Nelson. This room is open from 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. every school day. Mostly it is used by students, but the staff also welcomes senior citizens. Starting March 10 (which I realize was a couple of weeks back), the person in charge, Pari, is teaching a computer class for seniors. By all means, phone him up and ask if you can join late, or when he will start the next class. His cell phone number is 408 205-3243. Or phone the YMCA office at 650 856-9622.

It is so easy to get there. Cross El Camino Real on Los Robles/West Meadow, then turn left on Second St., which dead-ends right at a gate into the Ventura Center. Walk in, and the computer room is the fourth door on the right.

Group Lunch Time

We had our February group lunch February 8 at Compadres, and had a huge turnout. The food is always good there, and they give us the covered patio, which we have all to ourselves. Next lunch will be the second Tuesday in April, but venue has not yet been chosen. Any ideas?

If you are not on our list and would like to come, just let us know.

Old Folks and Young Folks

At the end of this column, you will see a paragraph that Sheila Mandoli wrote about Intergenerational Week. One of the people at our table during the February lunch raved about what fun it was last year, so we signed up. Expect a report in the Summer newsletter.

Volunteers Available

We continue to have a group of volunteers who offer services to Barron Park neighbors. We can

Run an errand for you or with you.

Do small odd jobs at your home.

Stop by for a visit.

Give you a daily phone call.

You can reach Mary Jane Leon at 493-5248 or mjleon@earthlink.net; Julie Spengler at 493-9151 or julie.899@juno.com.

Volunteer Needed

We need someone to maintain our membership database and become the Membership Chair for the BPA Board. Training and support will be provided.

This is a great opportunity to get to know your neighbors and to work with a fun organization. If you are interested, please contact Mary Jane Leon, BPA Treasurer, at 493-5248 or mjleon@earthlink.net

INTERGENERATIONAL WEEK

By Sheila Mandoli

When the Barron Park seniors met for lunch on the 2nd Tues of February, this time at 1:00 at Compadres, I asked them to sign up to participate in a Palo Alto Program during the third week in May. This program is called Intergenerational Week. As the title indicates, it aims to bring elders and young people together. Dialogs, games, interviews

and experiences shared develop attitudes and changes in relationship that may be not only fun but also invaluable for a lifetime. Twelve Barron Parkers signed to participate. Thank you All! If you, of any age, are interested in participating in this important project, call Sheila Mandoli (650)493-2361 x19 or (650) 493-9180.

Community Safety: Improved Communications

By Doug Moran

The City's problems last spring with alerting residents of mountain lion sightings raised the profile of the larger problem. Neighborhood Watch and several related activities were eliminated in the late 1990s for legitimate reasons. Participation had declined because of changing lifestyles—it was very hard to organize meetings that had adequate attendance, partly because people were busier and partly because it was a low priority in a low-crime area. Faced with budgetary problems, cutting Community Services officers was an attractive solution, and Palo Alto now has only one remaining.

However, while the structure of the Neighborhood Watch program was no longer effective, many of the motivations behind the program still existed, and nothing was put into place to address them. Primary of these was better communication between Police and residents, so that both knew better what to look out for.

Although a number of us had been agitating to have this problem addressed, we hadn't managed to get the attention of enough of the key players at the same time and then keep them focused on it. This changed last spring with the glaring deficiencies in the City's process for emergency alerts, in this case for mountain lion sightings.

The City's automated telephone messaging system, TeleMinder, has many constraints that limit its use. For example, it couldn't be used for one lion sighting because too much time had passed before the police could verify the report for it to still qualify as "urgent."

And there are problems selecting what numbers to call. Although the system provides substantial flexibility in selecting the geographic areas to be notified (and sequencing them), the database of phone numbers is inflexible—it is simply all land-lines by location in that area. Hence, TeleMinder spends a lot of time calling lines used for faxes and computers, and cannot call cell phones. Aside: the City is exploring a system which reduces some of these problems.

The feedback that Patrick Muffler collected after the use of TeleMinder in portions of Barron Park was that there were a surprisingly high number of technical glitches with the system.

Finally, many people are poor at remembering, or writing down, the information from telephone calls in a way that it can be adequately and accurately conveyed to neighbors.

The fundamental problem is that no one system is going to be adequate for all the likely circumstances. Use of e-mail and a web site are obvious first choices to fill some of the gaps in the current system. While not everyone has e-mail and many who do have it check it infrequently, it is a cheap and fast way to get a message to a large number of people. And e-mail messages are easily printed, so there is no information lost when you pass it on.

E-mail is substantially less intrusive, and more easily dealt with, than a TeleMinder call, thereby allowing it to be used in more ambiguous situations. E-mail also provides a simple mechanism for sending (short) text messages to cell phones (and pagers).

Web pages would provide a mechanism for providing details beyond what is provided in the e-mail or text messages. And it can be easily updated, including providing information when the situation is resolved (something the TeleMinder system is not allowed to do).

Although this effort has been pushed by the BPA and several other neighborhood associations, it is likely to be taken over by a new organization, Friends of the Palo Alto Police (www.papdfriends.org) to try to concentrate several related activities "under one umbrella."

Many of the people involved in this effort are focused on emergency notifications, but I am coming at it from a different angle. Experience has taught me not to expect emergency systems to work. If they aren't used routinely, people forget that they are available, or are slow and make mistakes in using them, or encounter problems because the equipment has

deteriorated. During the first mountain lion incident last spring (the one that was killed), there was a long delay in activating the TeleMinder system because the Police were so busy organizing their search that they didn't remember it.

I am pushing for the proposed notification system to be used by officers in following up on crimes. Currently, when they canvass an area for witnesses, they leave their business cards at the doors of people that are not home. This is very labor-intensive, and hence limits the area canvassed. For example, several years ago, a person living on Matadero Creek came home and interrupted an apparent burglary attempt. Residents on the other side of the creek observed an unfamiliar car speeding down their street at almost the exact time of the incident (and wrote down the license plate number). However, this connection was made only because of an off-handed comment during a chance meeting of two people from the different sides of the creek.

I also see this system useful for the Police to inform residents of crime trends, of what to be especially on the watch for, and the terminology to report it to facilitate the response by the police. Currently, there are massive delays in propagating this info. For example, several years ago, identity thieves hit several mailboxes on Matadero and Josina. Three days after this was discovered, I heard of it from a neighbor who had heard of it from the USPS letter carrier, and only because she was standing by her mailbox when he came by.

An advantage of this day-to-day use of such a system is not only improvement in communication between the police and residents, but that residents will find out, in normal conversations, which of their neighbors don't get the alerts directly. Thus, when there are important alerts, people who get them can quickly pass them on to neighbors who don't. And it was this sense of community awareness that was the other big component of Neighborhood Watch for which there is a continuing need.

HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY

By Shari Daiuto

There are so many appealing facets to this “gem” within Palo Alto and I truly feel lucky to live here. One of the reasons we wanted to raise our family in Barron Park was because of its unique surroundings. I’m not only referring to its distinct physical characteristics, but also the diversity of neighbors who share this wonderful place.

While we enjoy living in our neighborhood, it’s important to remember the ways that we benefit from having such an outstanding and organized neighborhood association. Being a member of the BPA allows you to stay up-to-date with current neighborhood issues. Also, it gives individual neighbors a place to share their opinions about issues involving our neighborhood. However, one thing that people may not be aware of is that the BPA is a wonderful resource to have when you run into an issue and need some support. Our board is willing to listen and help out whenever possible. After all, the BPA’s motto is, “Our focus is community service and improvement, and representing the neighborhood before government bodies.” Recently, Cingular proposed building a phone tower near the BlockBuster store on

Los Robles, near El Camino. A concerned neighbor brought up this issue to the board. The BPA spent time investigating the proposal and created a link on its Web site specifically for this particular issue.

As the BPA provides support to us, we should also support the BPA. At the minimum, paying your annual dues helps support the BPA. However, since the BPA is made up of volunteers, it’s important to keep this association alive by volunteering for something that’s near and dear to your heart. Perhaps you can plan a block party for your street. A few neighbors do this on a regular basis and have had great success and fun. Or you could volunteer for the May Fete. Or if you’d like some ideas, there are several programs that are in need of a leader (e.g., garden committee). Please don’t overlook or take for granted the exceptional neighborhood association that makes Barron Park a great place to live.

Planning a Block Party?

Send us a photo, and we’ll try to publish it in the Fall newsletter.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association
4028 Laguna Way
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Barron Park May Fete—May 22, 2005

Jeannie Lythcott and her daughter, Julie Lythcott-Haims have graciously agreed to coordinate this year’s May Fete.

The event will take place on May 22, 2005 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Bol Park. This year’s party will feature the beautifully decorated Maypole provided by Paul Edwards and crew. We will march around to the strains of Alan Keith’s bagpipe music and then do Maypole dancing

— little people first, then bigger ones — accompanied by our wonderful musicians. Each dancer will hold a brilliantly colored satin ribbon.

In addition to the Maypole dance, on-stage music will be provided by some great local groups: Broceliande, Harmon’s Peak, Les Campagnards, and a local school band such as the Terman Jazz Ensemble. Also possible are some performing dancers, both adult and from local schools.

Activities will include face painting for children, donkey parade, history exhibit, fire truck, and much more. Suggestions for other activities from the Barron Park community are welcome. Julie can be reached at 494-0154 or lythcott@stanford.edu, and Jeannie 856-0871 or jlythcot@stanford.edu.

Food will be provided by local caterers; so come for lunch and stay for a wonderful afternoon with the Barron Park community.



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