

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Lynnne Melena, BPA President

Council Will Decide Whether to Re-stripe Arastradero Road This Summer

The City of Palo Alto's six-year effort to improve the Charleston-Arastradero Corridor for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists has finally reached our neighborhood. Later this summer, the Palo Alto City Council will decide whether to re-stripe Arastradero Road and add medians. The re-striping will be implemented on a one-year trial basis to evaluate whether improvements can be made without creating significant delays for existing and projected traffic.

The first phase of the Corridor project was re-striping Charleston Road which the Council approved last year after a one-year trial. Permanent raised medians and landscaping won't be installed until a funding source has been found. Arastradero is more problematic because it carries more traffic than Charleston and has the added challenge of morning congestion at the entrances to Terman Middle School and Gunn High School.

I have been serving on a stakeholder group made up of representatives of neighborhood associations, school district staff and parents, and others with a stake in the project. Over the past year, our group has been meeting with City staff and the City's traffic consultant to provide feedback on the plans for Arastradero. There have been traffic counts, field observations, test runs, and multiple

iterations of re-striping plans. The proposal has now been narrowed to two alternative re-striping plans for the section of Arastradero between Gunn and El Camino Real. There would be no changes to the roadway west of the Gunn entrance.

1. Four lanes plus a narrow median and left turn lanes (narrow bike lanes and a complete parking prohibition).
2. Hybrid of two and four lanes with left turn lanes (with wider bike lanes and parking). Between Gunn and the Donald/Terman intersection, there would be two westbound lanes and one eastbound lane. At the Donald/Terman intersection, there would be two westbound and two eastbound lanes, and from that intersection to El Camino Real, there would be one lane in each direction with left turn lanes at all intersections.

Another alternative, which consisted of two lanes plus a wide median and left turn lanes, was discarded because it did not meet the City's criteria—see below.

The City Council could also decide to do nothing on Arastradero.

Staff and the consultant are recommending the Hybrid option, and the stakeholder group is supportive. A community meeting to review the alternatives was held at Juana Briones School on June 9. There were about 75–100 people in attendance. The Planning

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]

Barron Park Association Welcoming Gathering

Please save the date: Sunday, August 30th, 2–4pm!

Whether "old," "new," or "in between," looking forward to our annual end of the summer/beginning of fall welcoming and getting-to-know neighbors, Barron Park Association Welcoming Gathering in Bol Park!

Plans so far include free ice-cream from Driftwood Deli, Gary and Jena's Side by Side traditional song fest, Perry and Niner, our neighborhood donkeys, 2:30–3:30pm, and Sunday afternoon parent-child soccer game at 4pm!

If you would like to participate in arrangements, suggest activities, or refreshments, please contact Gwen Luce, BPA Welcoming Chair: 650-224-3670 or gluce@cbnocal.com.



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and Transportation Commission is scheduled to review the alternatives in late June (after this was written).

Why Change Arastradero?

In 2004, the City Council adopted several goals for the Charleston-Arastradero Corridor:

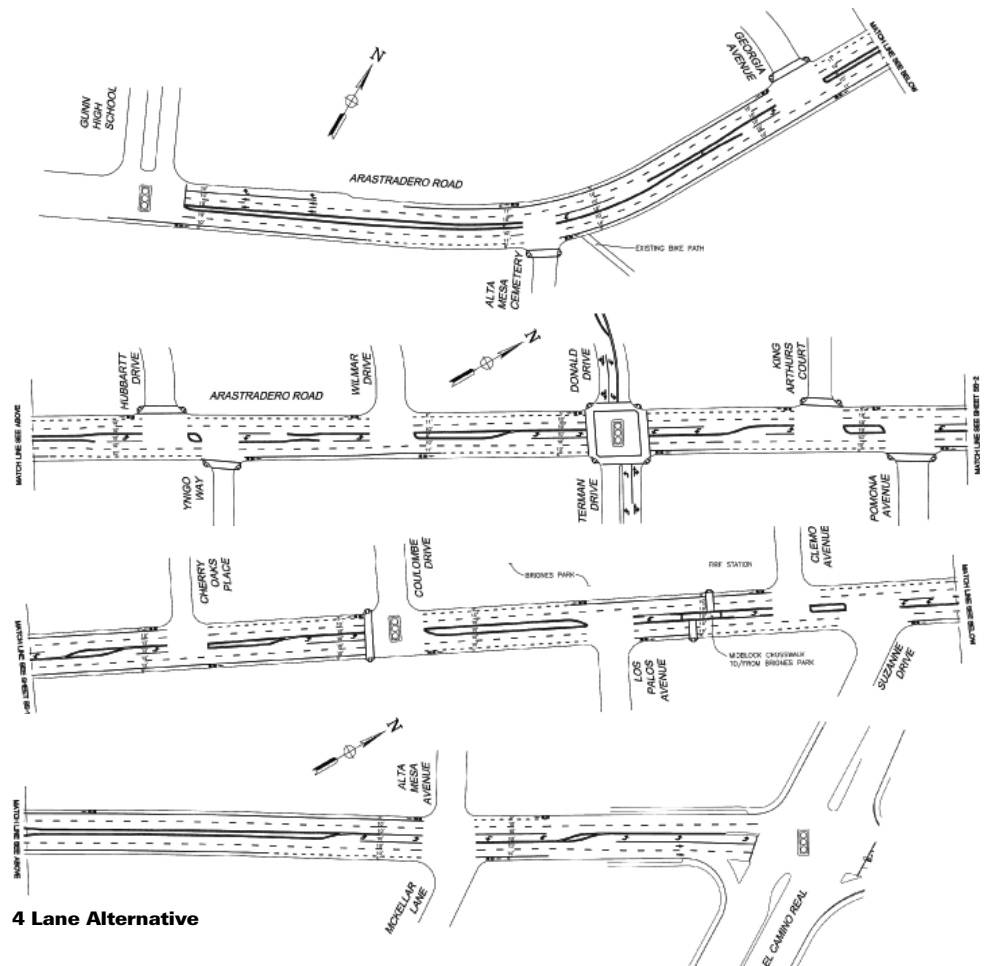
- Improve the quality of the bike and pedestrian experience.
- Enhance school commute safety for K–12 students (there are 11 schools in the corridor).
- Enhance the streetscape environment and quality of life in the corridor.
- Determine the effects of future traffic demand through 2015 (major new projects, such as the Campus for Jewish Life, will be completed and occupied by this date).
- Minimize traffic shift to adjacent streets.

Any alternative that is adopted will have to meeting the following criteria adopted by the City Council:

- No increase in peak and off-peak corridor travel time.
- No significant increase in delay at the signalized intersections.
- Reduce crash rates by at least 25 percent.
- Reduce off-peak hour traffic speeds.
- Increase pedestrian, bicycle and transit use by specified amounts.

Undivided four lane roads carrying high traffic volumes, such as Arastradero, are dangerous. According to the City’s traffic consultant, statewide the accident rate for undivided four lane roads is twice as high as for similar roads with medians. Between 1998 and 2002, there were 471 accidents on Arastradero of which 78 were injury accidents. All but one of the 24 bicycle/pedestrian accidents included an injury. Forty-seven percent of all of the auto accidents were rear-end or side-swipe accidents which are related to the lack of left turn lanes. In fact, during peak hours, Arastradero is no longer a four-lane road because cars hold up traffic in one lane while they wait for a gap to make a left turn. (Accident information was provided by the traffic consultant.)

The challenge for Arastradero has been how to minimize the congestion at the middle and high school entrances in the morning so that through traffic can continue to flow even if the number of lanes is reduced. A right turn lane was added at the Gunn entrance in 2006 and a further modification (two incoming traffic lanes on the campus) was made last summer. These changes have



4 Lane Alternative

helped relieve congestion, but not enough to completely eliminate the back-up on Arastradero. Therefore, narrowing Arastradero Road to one lane in the west-bound direction near the entrance was deemed infeasible and is not included in the preferred Hybrid alternative.

Comparison of Alternatives

A complete description of the alternatives, plus diagrams, can be found in a report on the City’s web site <http://www.cityofpalocalto.org/civical/filebank/blobdownload.asp?BlobID=16098>. This report is the source of the traffic information in this summary. Features that both alternatives have are:

- Left turn lanes at most intersections.
- Medians between intersections, which would vary in width from 6 to 16 feet depending on the alternative.
- Crosswalks combined with refuge islands at selected locations. Only one would be installed for the trial project—at Juana Briones Park. Actual raised islands, rather than just striping, would be used for the trial.
- Redesign of the intersection of Donald and

Terman to handle more traffic, including adding a lane to Donald near the intersection.

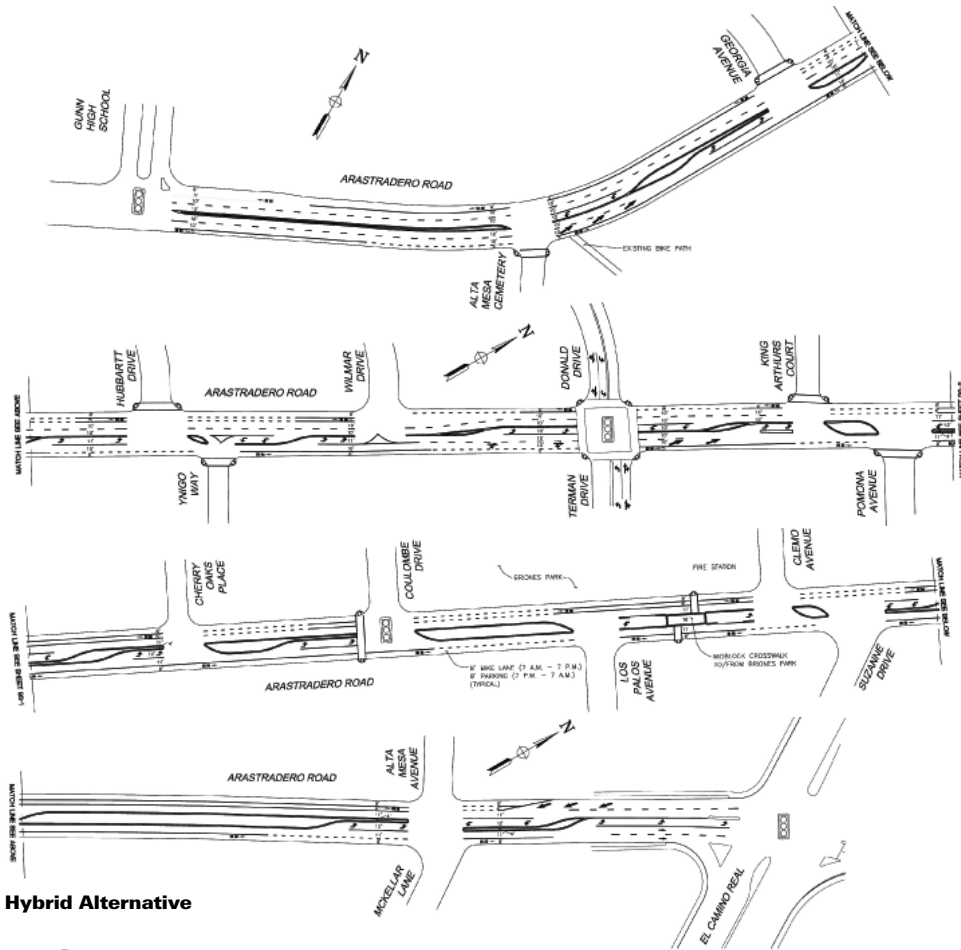
Traffic adaptive signal timing under which signals cycle from red to green to red depending on the amount of traffic at the intersection (rather than on a set schedule which “wastes” green time if no cars are waiting).

Bicycle Lanes

The traffic consultant used a traffic model to make comparisons of how the two alternatives operate (average speed, time to travel from Gunn to El Camino, delay at intersections). These data were compared to existing conditions.

The four lane alternative would result in shorter delays at intersections and accidents could be reduced by 40 percent. However, it will require parking to be removed on both sides of Arastradero and it won’t reduce speeds (that are as high as 50 mph). The narrow bike lanes (5 feet) do not reduce bike accidents.

The Hybrid alternative would greatly improve bicycle/pedestrian safety, reduce average speeds and eliminate very high



Hybrid Alternative

speeds, greatly improve the ability of pedestrians to cross streets and accidents could be reduced by 50 percent. However, there will be longer queues at Coulombe and longer delays at other intersections for people turning left onto Arastradero from side streets (and from Arastradero on to side streets).

As pointed out at the community meeting, the medians in both alternatives would also prevent residents whose homes front on Arastradero Road from turning left into their driveways.

The consultant notes in his report that modifying the number of lanes (the Hybrid alternative) affects traffic operations, but not to the extent that would be imagined. He says, "The assumption is that vehicle capacity is reduced by half, but it is not reduced by much, if at all, because the delays caused by vehicles stopped in the left lanes waiting to make left turns turn those lanes into de facto left turn lanes." For example, the Hybrid alternative is slightly slower eastbound and significantly faster westbound than existing in the morning peak hour."

The consultant's conclusion is that the Hybrid alternative best preserves vehicular capacity while buffering pedestrian and bicycle traffic from vehicular traffic, and that

it is likely that corridor traffic performance will be at least as good as the current four-lane divided cross section.

My Conclusion

Arastradero Road was built at a time when road design was centered almost exclusively on the auto and there wasn't much thought given to walking or bicycling. We now know that a four-lane road with few opportunities to cross on foot and very few left turn lanes is hazardous for everyone, especially with more students using the roadway.

The schools are working hard to reduce their contribution to congestion. Between 2002 and 2008, the number of students bicycling to Gunn High School increased from 166 to 600 (from 10 percent to 31 percent). To maintain and improve this record at all the schools, Arastradero Road has to be a safe place to bicycle and walk. To accommodate all drivers on Arastradero Road, the design has to have enough capacity to prevent horrendous back-ups. Why not give the Hybrid a chance to prove it can accomplish both of these goals with the added benefits of making left turns safer throughout the day. It could mean that Arastradero becomes a beautifully landscaped boulevard some day.

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BPA meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of most months at 7:15 p.m.
Call Lynnie Melena for location: 493-2135

www.bpaonline.org

31ST BPA MAY FÊTE SIZZLED

By Sue Luttner



Photo by Sue Luttner

With no afternoon wind, Maypole ribbons held straight and untangled as the dancers weaved a sheath down the pole, starting with the children's wrap.

Despite temperatures in the 90s, this year's BPA May Fête was lively as ever, with a new carnival atmosphere.

Our youngest fête chair to date, Sarah Van Zanten, with support from co-chair John King, pulled in a new generation of volunteers and introduced cake walks, three-legged races, and a jump tent to the usual children's games. Side by Side, Slainte, Les Campagnards, and Mad Molly provided live music and dancing, and the newly forming BPA Green Team joined the histo-

ry exhibit, the emergency-preparedness team, and other traditional participants.

Our local merchants came through with both cash and in-kind donations. Please patronize these businesses and thank them for their support of the BPA.

Sponsors: Boston Market; Jim Davis Automotive; Ernie's Wines & Liquors; Phillip Fletcher, Dentistry; John King, All-house-King Realty; Lydia Kou and Jon St. Clair III, Alain Pinel Realty; Gwen Luce, Coldwell Banker Realty; Mark Van Zanten, guitar lessons; A-1 Liquors; Carlsen

Volvo; Palo Alto Auto Repairs, Inc.; Stanford Carpet.

In-Kind Donors: Barron Park Florist; Hobbee's; Celia's Mexican Restaurant; Creekside Inn; Classic Pet Grooming; Fish Market; Copy Factory; FedEx; Palo Alto Rowing Club.

Thanks also to the many volunteers who made the fête possible, with special mention to dance-caller Bob Fraley, music master Gary Breitbard, stage meister Larry Breed, and poster queen Susan Breitbard.

All photos by Jo Hamilton and Sue Luttner



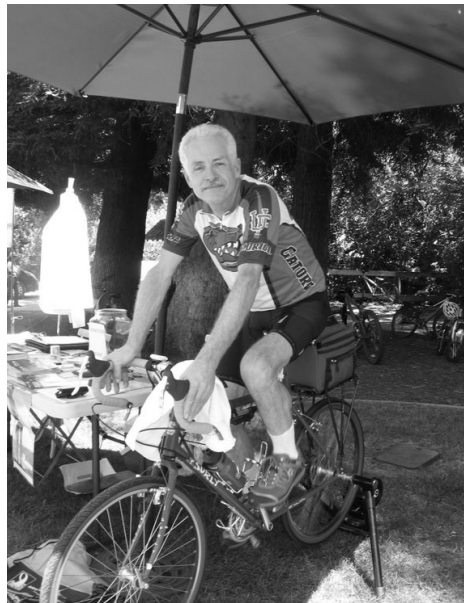
Haley King takes a break by the creek after helping her dad, John, flip burgers and dogs.



Volunteers Sage and Leslie stayed with us through clean-up.



Alexander and Imane Ashworth found a place in the shade.



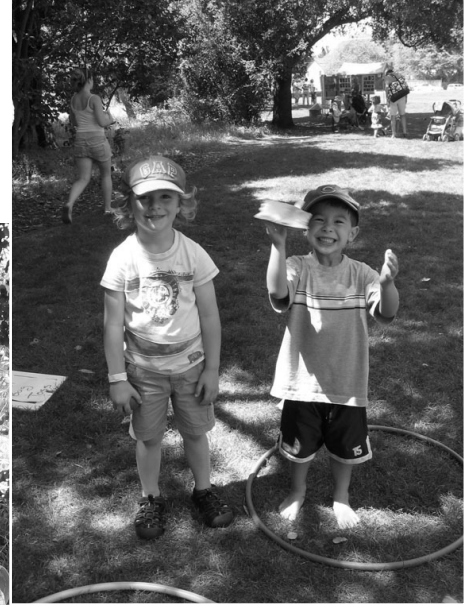
Richard Green, who lives on Kendall, recruited sponsors and raised awareness while gearing up for the AIDS/LifeCycle ride in early June, 565 miles from San Francisco to Los Angeles.



Sue Luttner added a mailbox matching game this year to the exhibit on gardening in Barron Park.

31ST BPA MAY FÊTE

Simon Illous and Colin Lee enjoyed the lawn games.



Three generations of Clint Smiths enjoyed the fête together. All three of them live in Barron Park, although only the youngest was born here.



Sode Smith, shown here with her grandfather Clint Smith, won a chocolate cake in the cake walk.



Verna Graham, Jan Murphy, and Doug Graham staffed the Barron Park historical exhibit. Doug, the neighborhood historian, welcomes your stories from the past. You can read another installment of his carefully researched chronicle in this issue.



Rookie fete chair Sarah Van Zanten put her friends and family to work. That's her father Mark loading the station wagon.



Jennifer Roderbach took advantage of the portable shade to join in the spirit.



While her husband Mark staffed the Green Team table, Romola Georgia joined the gardening display.



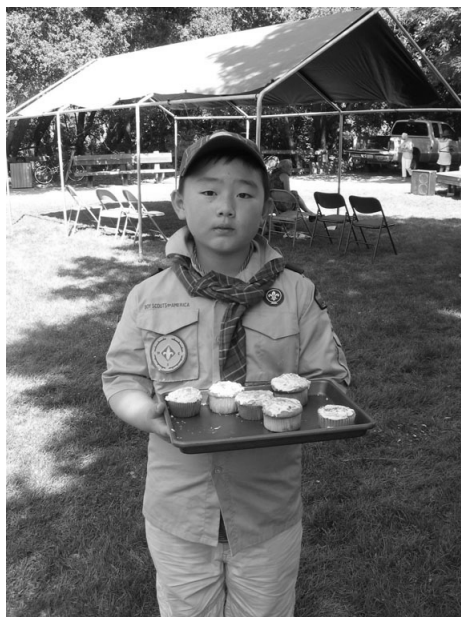
Michael and James Kim made a lively audience for the live music.

31ST BPA MAY FÊTE

Genevieve Thesen (4 1/2) enjoyed Perry.



Jan Peterson helped out at the gardening table, where you could also buy neighborhood note cards and donkey T-shirts.



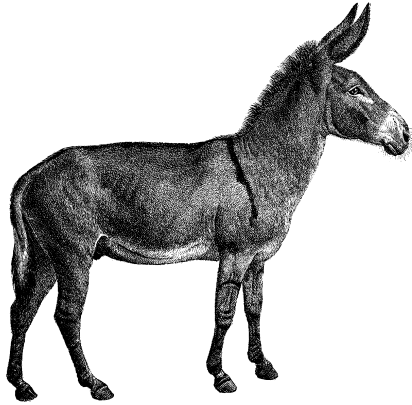
Our local boy scouts, including Kevin Duan, sold baked goods and fire extinguishers.



Anya and Emma Breitbard-Franzen, granddaughters of band member Gary Breitbard.

THE DONKEYS NEED A FEEDER FOR FRIDAY EVENINGS!

We need a replacement for Friday evening feedings. Please contact Bob Frost at bobfrost34@yahoo.com or 493-8272 if you would be willing to do this!



EMAIL LISTS

The BPA has three email lists: bpa-news, bpa-issues, and bpa-misc. They are hosted at Google Groups (moved January 2008). To join bpa-news, go to <http://groups.google.com/group/bpa-news> and click on "Join this group." Similarly for the other lists.

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

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Barron Park Association
724 Barron Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94306

Nancy "Jo" Hamilton
EDITOR

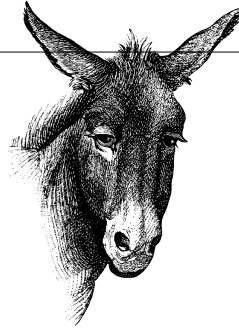
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Help Support the Barron Park Donkeys!

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



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

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

SUMMER AT THE CORNER OF BOL PARK

By Linda Elder

As I write this, it is early June in the native garden at the corner Bol Park at Matadero and Laguna. There is yellow-orange Sticky Monkey-flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus*), red-orange sage, (*Salvia "Bee's Bliss"*) and the white yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is out in abundance. Barron park residents walking or driving by the new corner garden (not to mention butterflies, hummingbirds, and honey bees) are taking delight in the seasonal changes in the now flourishing garden. I walk by the garden on my way to work everyday and think how lucky we are to have a local native garden and dedicated neighbors that made it happen.

The garden exists because of the efforts of two Barron park residents, Carla Bliss and Shirley Finrock, co-coordinators of the garden. For Phase I, they received a \$4000 grant from the Garden Club of Palo Alto, a solar controller unit donated by the Parks Department of the City of Palo Alto, and enlisted the help of garden professionals and volunteers to make a lovely native garden from a neglected corner of Bol Park. Phase I is nearly complete and they are ready to start with Phase II.

Phase II plans include landscaping along more of

Matadero and Roble Ridge, expansion of the garden size and the solar powered irrigation system. When Phase II is complete, the city may consider using it as a model native garden! How cool is that?

Additional funds are now needed for the expansion of the garden. Barron Park residents can help support the beatification of our beloved Bol Park. The Friends of the Palo Alto Parks (FOPAP) is sponsoring the Phase II expansion project and taking donations. FOPAP is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and all donations are tax-deductible. Visit the Friends of the Palo Alto Parks website (<http://www.friendsofpa.parks.org>) to make a donation, or mail them a check made out to FOPAP. Mail to Friends of the Palo Alto Parks, 425 Grant Ave., Suite 27, Palo Alto, CA 94306, and specify that it's for Bol Park.

Don't know your natives, or just curious about the development of our wonderful new native garden? Please contact Carla Bliss, co-coordinator, at 650-493-8194 for a personal tour of the garden. By the time you are reading this, it will be July and many other plants will be at their peak. Be sure to go and see the latest blooms in the summer native garden at the corner of Bol Park!



THE HEYDAY OF RESTAURANT ROW

WHEN PALO ALTO'S "RESTAURANT ROW" WAS IN BARRON PARK

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

1996: The end of Restaurant Row

When the Walgreens was built in 1996 on El Camino Real (ECR) at Maybell Avenue, most of our neighbors were glad to be getting the convenience of a full-service drug store in the neighborhood. However, this boon came with a price—the loss of the “flagship” dinner restaurant Chez Louis that dated from the days of Barron Park’s restaurant row. The wrecking ball took down a rambling, rustic style structure that had housed this regionally-renowned restaurant for more than six decades.

1932: A Roadhouse that was also a French Restaurant

At first it was named Frelier’s, for the owner Andre. In 1932, Frelier decided that the time had come to open a French restaurant to serve the growing well-to-do suburban population of Palo Alto and the rest of the “Mid-Peninsula” area. He built it in “roadhouse style.” perhaps because it was to be located on El Camino Real, which was then U.S. Highway 101, He was probably counting on the impending end of National Prohibition, scheduled for January 1, 1933, to help make a French restaurant successful (can you imagine a French Restaurant that can’t serve wine?). Frelier would have known that Palo Alto was going to remain “dry” because of deed restrictions and the “mile-and-a-half law,” and this dictated a location just outside the city line.

Palo Alto’s Lengthy Prohibition Era

There were no establishments that could serve alcoholic beverages in Palo Alto. If

you lived in Palo Alto and you wanted a glass of wine or beer with your meal, or a cocktail beforehand, or if you wanted to visit a tavern or bar, you had to travel to Menlo Park, to “Whiskey Gulch” on University Avenue in East Palo Alto, or...to El Camino at Barron Park, the notorious “sin strip” of Palo Alto.

The Infamous “Liquor Clause”

Of course, from 1919 to 1933, Palo Alto was dry by dint of National Prohibition. But even before that, Palo Alto had been laid out to be a “dry town.” By direction of Leland Stanford, urged on by his teetotaling wife Jane Lathrop Stanford, all properties in Palo Alto had deed restrictions on the sale of alcohol. This was the infamous “Liquor Clause.” These restrictions prevailed for about eighty years, from the 1890s until they were finally invalidated by the courts in the mid-1970s.

“The One-and-a-Half Mile Law”

To back this up, Stanford also had gotten a state law passed, in the early Twentieth Century, banning sales of liquor even outside Palo Alto, if within 1.5 miles of the campus (this was repealed in the 1970s). The sin was mostly in the eyes of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and their supporters, but it was enough to entice non-believers to the strip.

On the Barron Park strip of El Camino, the 1.5 mile limit was reached near Barron Avenue. From that point south, the restaurants offering fine dining started. Unfortunately for Barron Park’s image, that was where the bars and liquor stores started, too.

Frelier’s was a Success from the Start

Frelier’s got off to a good start in 1932. It featured French and Continental cuisine served in a low-ceilinged, wood-paneled elegantly rustic atmo-

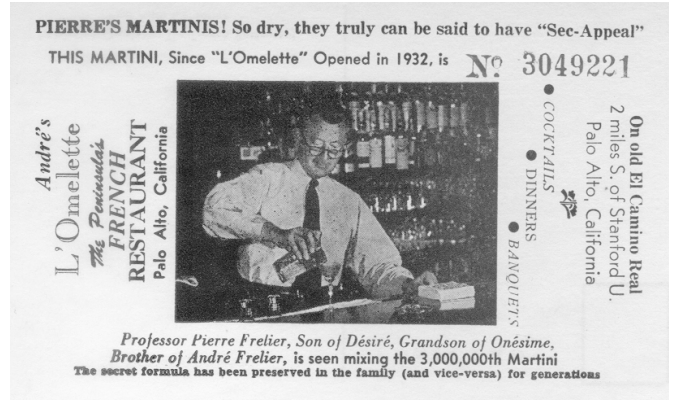


Photo B: Historic postcard of Pierre Frelier.

sphere, and attracted sophisticated diners from Palo Alto, Los Altos and well-to-do suburbs for many miles around. It successfully weathered the Great Depression, World War Two and explosive post-war suburban growth. Meanwhile, Andre Frelier’s personal reputation as an outstanding restaurateur grew in the surrounding communities, especially in Palo Alto and at Stanford. See Photo A—an historic postcard view of the cocktail lounge and Photo B—Brother Pierre Frelier mixing the 3,000,000th martini.

A Future President is Attracted by the Ambiance

According to Andre, John F. Kennedy used to hang out in L’Omelette’s lounge during the semester he spent at the Stanford Graduate School of Business in 1940-41. Neighborhood myth says that he had a “regular bar stool,” around which clustered his hangers-on and floozies.

L’Omelette

By 1955 Frelier had upgraded his facilities and renamed his former roadhouse restaurant “L’Omelette.” It was probably the most popular of the restaurants in the row, loved for its cuisine, the rustic décor, the “bistro ambiance” of the lively lounge, and Andre Frelier’s ability to inspire loyalty in his customers. Although the menu was French (it even included frog legs and snails), it avoided the stiffness of the “white-tablecloth” atmosphere of more formal restaurants like Stickneys. The red-and-white checkered tablecloths of L’Omelette suggested a “let-down-your-hair and let’s have some fun” attitude. See



Photo A: Historic postcard view of L’Omelette’s cocktail lounge. Which bar stool do you think “belonged” to John F. Kennedy when he hung out there in 1940?



Illustration C: The droll L’Omelette ad from the October, 1958 Stanford Chaparral.

Photo C – the L’Omelette ad from the October, 1958 edition of the Stanford Chaparral (the humor magazine).

L’Ommies Carried on the Tradition

In the 1970s, Frelier, growing old, sold L’Omelette, but refused to sell the name. The new owner used its popular nickname, “L’Ommies” as the business name, and it continued as if little had changed.

But the End Came for Chez Louis in 1996

Finally, it was sold again in the 1980s and became Chez Louis, which remained its name until it was closed and demolished in 1996. During all this time, the essence of the restaurant persisted and it remained highly popular. Its demise was mourned by many people—including those of us who were very glad to be getting a big new drugstore in the neighborhood.

The Strip’s Highway Past

Let’s return to the beginnings. Why was L’Omelette built as a “roadhouse,” a rambling structure with parking on both street frontages (ECR and Maybell)? Keep in mind that, in 1932, El Camino was a highway in reality, not just an urban boulevard with a State Highway number, like it is today. Then, it was lined with auto camps, trailer camps, early motels, “lunchrooms” and “roadhouses” (highway-oriented dining and drinking establishments). It was the main highway down the coast.

El Camino Real was California’s first State Highway, built in 1913–14 from San Francisco to San Jose. In the early 1920s it became U.S. 101, part of the new U.S. national highway system. In 1923, It was designated “El Camino Real” and marked with mission bell mileposts. The stretch through Mayfield was paved in 1926. At the time, it was the last unpaved sec-

tion remaining between San Francisco and San Jose.

The Beginnings of Our Neighborhood Activism?

The Barron Park stretch was widened to 3 lanes in 1930-31, requiring the removal of many mature eucalyptus trees in spite of vigorous local protests. This was also when the cutoff was built to avoid the sharp turn at El Camino Way. The cutoff took the front off, or cut through

the middle of at least five big properties in Barron Park between Los Robles Road and Maybelle Avenue. The condemnation suits brought by the state were very unpopular with those landowners, their friends, and many other people along the highway. Some land was taken off the front of the future L’Omelette property but it also flattened the angle at which the highway ran past the front of it. On the whole, it probably made it a better site for a new restaurant (see photo D).

At this same time, the Bayshore Highway was being built, and this is when the State dug the gigantic “borrow pit” where Maybell Court is now, to provide fill for the Bayshore Highway where it crossed seasonal wetlands. This led to an organized protest movement by the orchardists and other landowners in the Maybelle Avenue Area. The protesters ultimately met with the State Governor, but the state highway department plans were still carried out, anyway. This and the protests about the El Camino widening and the cutoff mark the beginning of defensive activism in our neighborhood and were the beginning of a unified feeling of neighborhood.

The 3-lane “Bloody Bayshore” was finished in 1936 to avoid the “Main Street” bottlenecks through the Peninsula cities and towns. The Bayshore Highway then became U.S. 101, but by 1938, Main Street Businessmen had arranged signs reading “101 Business” for El Camino Real.

More Highway Changes in the 1950s and 1960s

A fourth lane was added to El Camino Real (ECR) in the early 1950s to eliminate the “suicide” center passing lane. Many BP businesses had to be moved back away from the highway and diagonal parking

was ended. The tiny commercial lots that had been laid out by Colonel Sebastian Jones in the original Barron Park Subdivision in 1925 were made even smaller by this highway widening.

Lot Size is Critical

This has resulted in severe limitations on the size and kind of businesses that can occupy them. Modern businesses, depending on drive-up rather than walk-in customers, cannot find lots big enough to provide adequate parking. Complicating the picture is the split ownership of vacant lots that are held jointly by groups of descendants of the original owners from the 1930s-1950s. The resultant diffuse decision-making sometimes results in no decision at all, making it even harder to assemble blocks of land big enough to house a grocery store, for example. This problem has thwarted development of the strip since 1970 or earlier, and remains unchanged today.

The Final Widening in 1969

In the 1950s, the Bayshore became a freeway and ECR was re-designated “State Route 82.” El Camino was widened to be a six-lane boulevard through Palo Alto and Barron Park in 1969, bringing it up to the current standard. Since then, the only changes have been the addition of traffic

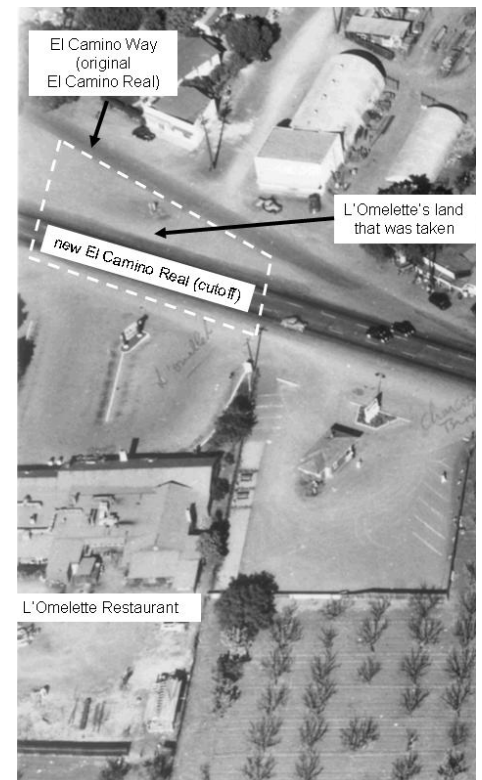


Photo D: Late 1940s aerial shot of L’Omelette, showing how the cutoff “shaved” the front off the property and flattened the angle.



Photo E: Rudolf's and the Axe House in 1985 (I believe there had been very little change in its overall appearance since the 1950s, but does anyone out there have an older photo?)

lights and turn lanes, and many changes to the landscaping of the median strip.

Restaurant Row

Now back to "Restaurant Row." L'Omelette was not alone in offering fine dining. The Barron Park strip of El Camino businesses contained several other top-grade restaurants, including Rudolf's, Stickney's, and Rick's Swiss Chalet. Several couples that I have talked with, who dined out extensively on El Camino in the 1960s and 1970s, rated the top four in approximately the order I have listed them here. There seems to be widespread agreement that L'Omelette and its successor L'Ommies were really the best.

Rudolfo's and the Axe House

The three others were also very fine dinner restaurants. Rudolf's and its appendage, the Axe House Pizza Parlor, were possibly the most popular among Barron Park residents. Rudolf's was located at the main entrance to Barron Park, at 4020 ECR and the corner of Los Robles Avenue. It offered traditional Italian food in a large but dark dining room and private rooms; the Axe House was a narrow, porch-like room with big windows, adjoining Los Robles across from the Buena Vista property. See Photo E, taken in 1985. The Buena Vista property included the Chat-and-Chew highway lunch spot in the 1940s and then the All-American Market starting about 1950, as well as the trailer park and gas station.

The Axe House was named for the regionally famous "Stanford Axe," the trophy that is traditionally awarded to the winner of "The Big Game," the century-old football rivalry between Stanford and the University of California (Berkeley). It featured a replica of the Axe (the original must be guarded carefully by each year's winner, as it has been the target of many successful thefts and pranks over the years). It was a very popular pizza parlor and always crowded by families with children. Later in the evenings the Stanford Students would

crowd in (see illustration F, Rudolf's ad).

Stickney's

Stickney's was a unit in a three-restaurant chain, the other two being at the Town and Country Shopping Center and in Menlo Park. Our branch was at 3398 ECR, where Cibo's is today, and like Cibo's was associated with the adjacent hotel, which was then the Flamingo Lodge (now the Creekside

Inn). Stickney's had a traditional American-style dinner menu, white table cloths and a slightly pretentious atmosphere. But the food was good, the décor pleasant if unremarkable and there was often live music in the lounge. After Stickney's pulled out of Barron Park, the restaurant became Fresco, and then briefly the Willow Street Café before Cibo's came in.

Rick's Swiss Chalet

Rick's was located at 4085 El Camino Way, at the corner of East Meadow Drive where the Goodwill Store is now. Rick's apparently replaced an earlier restaurant known as "The Shack." It was purchased in 1960 by John and Lorraine Rickey, the owners of Rickey's Garden Hotel. They renamed it "Rick's Swiss Chalet, installed Swiss décor, changed to a Swiss-German menu, and even hired a German band. It became, and remained for several decades one of the best-known German restaurants in the mid-Peninsula area. It was a popular spots for business meetings, hosting groups as disparate as the San Francisco Bay Section of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), the Peninsula Swiss Club and the Northern California Branch of the Norton (motorcycle brand) Owners Club.

Other Restaurants

Second-level family dining could be found at El Rancho, Kinner's, Long Barn and Del Monaco's. (see illustrations G and H, a locator map and key). Several well-known drive-in burger joints were also located here. This cluster of at least 16 well-known restaurants and bars was unsurpassed, at the time, on the Peninsula or in Santa Clara County, especially for fine dining.

Longbarn Restaurant and Ming's

At 4100 ECR was the Longbarn Restaurant. This was where Ming's was later established, in the early 1960s (it was moved to

Embarcadero east of the Bayshore Freeway about 1970). After Ming's left Barron Park, the property was demolished and Blockbuster built the structure that then housed it for about a dozen years and that now shelters Congregation Emek Baracha.

The Iron Works and Compadre's

Iron Arts at 3877 ECR was an actual forge and sheet-metal shop in the 1940s. During the 1980s and 1990s it was The Iron Works restaurant, with an "Early California" cuisine and motif. Following a change of ownership, it was renamed Compadre's, and remained a popular eating, drinking and meeting spot, especially among the younger generation, until it's sudden and surprising closure in September, 2008.

Burger Heaven

There were many places along El Camino to get hamburgers, hot dogs, French fries, et cetera—more than there are now. Barron Park's burger joints were very popular in the neighborhood and among Stanford Students. They included Kirk's Drive-in and Pard's Barbeque, both located near the intersection of ECR and Charleston and Arastradero Roads, which must have been hamburger heaven on weekend nights. In their ads, they located themselves as being "two miles south of Stanford," or "just one block north of Rickeys" (a slight exaggeration). See the Kirk's and Pard's ads, Illustrations I and J.

Pard's Barbeque

One former Mayfield School student, writing in a blog created by Palo Alto Online, remembers Pard's Barbeque, "the round hamburger restaurant on El Camino by Arastradero" (it was located at 4191 on the east side of El Camino Real, a few feet north of where Jiffy Lube is today.) The student wrote that "They had the square metal play-for-pay (for 25 cents) music boxes on each table...(a) great stop off place, they had a round fireplace in the middle of all the tables and it was usually lit."

Kirk's

"Mayfield Child" continues in the blog;

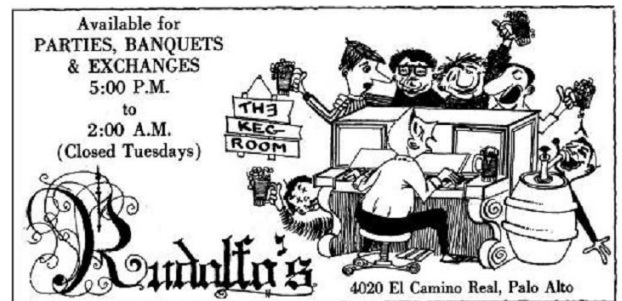
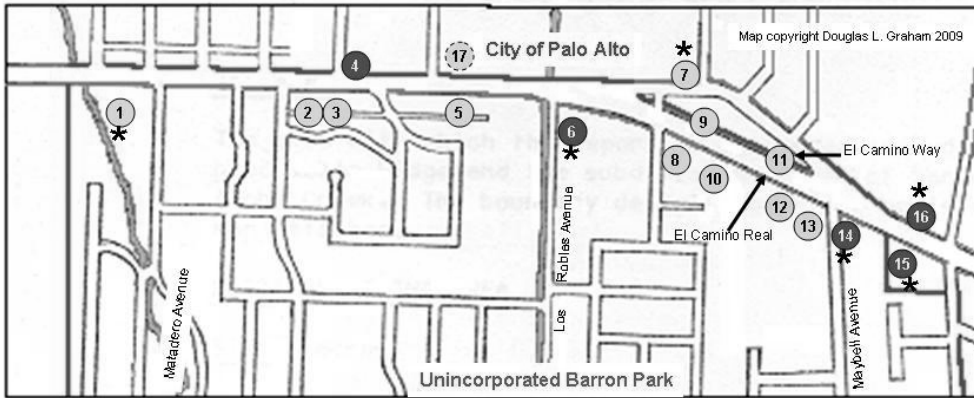


Illustration F: Rudolf's ad from Chaparral, February, 1959.



Key: ● Barron Park Restaurants advertising in the *Stanford Chaparral* ○ Other Popular Barron Park Bars and Restaurants * Favorites of Many Barron Parkers

Illustration G: Popular Barron Park bars and restaurants, 1957-1961.

- * 1 3398 Stickney's (later Fresco, then briefly The Willow Street Cafe, now Cibo)
- 2 3740 El Real Tavern (later La Terrasse, now Celia's)
- 3 3780 Kinner's (now Stanford Carpets)
- 4 3901 El Rancho Restaurant (later Harold's Club, then La Cumbre, then rebuilt as Hollywood Video, now Star One Federal Credit Union)
- 5 3924 Fred's Place (bar) (later The Bucket, then Armando's, now Rice Thai Restaurant)
- * 6 4020 Rudolfo's & Axe House (closed in 1993 - now Villas de las Plazas condos)
- * 7 4085 Rick's Swiss Chalet (now the Goodwill Store)
- 8 4102 Long Barn Restaurant (later Ming's, which moved to the Bayshore, then rebuilt for Blockbuster, which later moved to its current location) (4102 now shelters Congregation Emek Baracha)
- 9 4119 Del Monaco - Pizza & Italian (now Fuki Sushi tofu house)
- 10 4120 Congers Club (later Cameo Club, then closed in 1993 and demolished for the 1999 condominium development, Driscoll Place)
- 11 4141 The Island - tavern (now Dan Brown's)
- 12 4156 Heidelberg Biergarten (now rebuilt as an addition to the Townhouse Inn)
- 13 4160 Chinese Kitchen Restaurant (now rebuilt as an addition to the Townhouse Inn)
- * 14 4170 Frelier's L'Omelette (later L'Ommies, finally Chez Louis, now rebuilt as Walgreen's Drugstore)
- * 15 4180 Kirk's Drive-In Restaurant (later Lutz Ford, then Peninsula Ford, now Carlsen Volvo)
- * 16 4191 Pard's Barbeque - hamburgers (This number is now assigned to a vacant half of a building which is also occupied by Enterprise Rent-a Car at 4193)
- 17 3877 Iron Arts - site of future Iron Works Restaurant, then Compadre's

Illustration H: Key to locator map.

"Kirk's...they were across the street and down a block from Pard's on El Camino then" ... (actually, Kirk's was almost directly opposite Pard's and was at 4186 El Camino Real, where Carlsen Volvo is currently located—the former Lutz Ford, then Peninsula Ford). "...they were serving hamburgers there and you had to stand up to eat them at a table as they had no stools to sit on!...Unless you went outside to the BBQ area...they moved to California Avenue and then to Town and Country Village..." Kirk's Steakburgers is still at Town and Country, where an enlarged photo of their Barron Park burger shack hangs on the wall today.

El Rancho Restaurant

El Rancho, at 3901 ECR, was an informal dinner restaurant associated with (perhaps

owned by?) El Rancho Motel located behind it (now the Quality Inn). See illustration K, an ad from *Chaparral*). According to my small corps of confidential informants, as a dinner restaurant for a memorable night out with your significant other, it would have been a bust. The restaurant later became a dive (Harold's Club), and then a REAL low-life dive—La Cumbre. See Photo L, the La Cumbre building in 1996 (two years after the business closed).

La Cumbre—Fistfight Central

La Cumbre, at 3901 ECR, was the biggest source of social and criminal trouble there has ever been from any business on our part of the strip. In the early 1990s, La Cumbre became a magnet for young men who wanted to go

out in groups, meet strangers, drink with them and then beat them up. The touring groups got larger and meaner, and the fights got bigger and bigger until, on one memorable occasion, every available police unit from Palo Alto, Mountain View, Stanford and the California Highway Patrol were called in to control the crowd, which had debouched into El Camino to get more elbow room. As Bob Moss wrote in the Winter 1993 BP Newsletter, "It took two hours for the police to get control, and five people were treated for stab wounds. El Camino was closed for two hours that morning (in September). As a result, the (Palo Alto) Zoning Administrator revoked their use permit in November." This was the beginning of the end for La Cumbre.

The City Council confirmed the revocation of the use permit on May 23, 1994. Sixty days later, per the law, La Cumbre ceased operations, but immediately filed a lawsuit against Palo Alto. It never reopened,

Later at that address, Hollywood Video erected a new structure and operated for years before closing recently. It is now Star One Federal Credit Union—a remarkable transition from La Cumbre.

The Other Bars

I did not attempt to show all the bars on the locator map—only the more notorious ones. There were probably at least a half-dozen besides the four that my map pin-points. Undoubtedly the most famous one of the four was the Congers Club, at 4120 ECR. I have no photo of the building—does any reader have one?

The Congers Club Fire

Joe Weiler, who gave an oral history in 1977, said that the Congers Club was popular partly because they featured a 16-ounce beer they call the fishbowl that they sold for a quarter. The club was also locally renowned for having been the scene of the worst fire ever fought by the Barron Park Volunteer Fire Department. Joe was one of the volunteer firemen. He said the fire was called in at around four o'clock on a freez-



Illustration I: Kirk's ad from *Chaparral*, November, 1957.

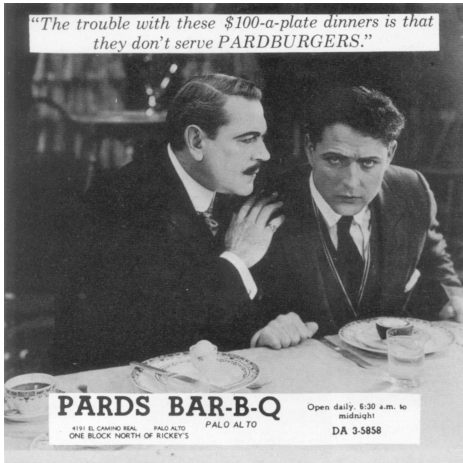


Illustration J : Pard's ad from Chaparral, February, 1960.

ing winter morning and the temperature was down around 26 to 28 degrees. Joe said when they got hooked up to the hydrant and started putting water on the fire, "...the water froze and came down on the driveways and froze and we couldn't stand up and we'd never fought a fire like this before. Someone should have taken photos because it was pretty comical."

It was a very hot fire, and difficult to put out because of the way the Cameo Club was constructed. He related that the place had been renovated several times. "One of the problems with that fire was that a wall would have two or three layers. When they would refurbish it, they wouldn't just paint the wall and put (a) little paper on it, they wanted another look. So one wall would be here, then a little air space and another wall and another wall. The ceiling was the same way. It was a terrible thing to put out

because it was burning inside. You'd get a fire out and (then find) it was burning BEHIND this wall. (The water) was freezing and it was cold and it was a mess." This fire was probably some time in the 1960s.

Cameo Club—A Gambling Joint

The Congers was later re-named the

Cameo Club and was the scene of much gambling in the 1980s. The gambling was probably mostly legal—the club apparently had a permit as a "card room." One poker website on today's internet has a record of a high-stakes poker tournament played there on October 10, 1989. The game was recorded as "\$100, no limit ace to five lowball." The total paid out was over \$10,000, and the first-place winner took home \$4,661. The Cameo Club was closed July 20, 1993 as part of the zoning change in that area from commercial to multi-family housing. In 1999 the building was demolished to build the condominium complex, Driscoll Place.

Fred's Place

Another bar with a history of problems with the larger community was Fred's Place, owned by Fred Mayer, at 3924 ECR. I have been in touch with Carolyn Feroben, who attended the private Verna Jean School at 3875 La Selva Drive from about 1949 to 1952 before transferring to Barron Park Elementary School. Fred's place was on ECR directly in back of the Verna Jean School and Carolyn became friendly with Ruth Mayer, Fred's daughter, in a sort of across-the-back-fence friendship. Apparently the bar was very noisy at night (when Carolyn was at home on Verdosa Drive) and had had some troubles with the neighbors.

The Bucket and Armando's

Fred's Place later became The Bucket. Can any reader tell me anything about The Bucket?

The Bucket morphed into Armando's Lunch, Beer and Wine, which I believe became notorious for noise and fights. Can anyone tell me anything about either business? For a picture of the building see Photo M, Armandos in 1985.

Now, 24 years later, the address is occupied by a new restaurant that is quickly becoming a favorite of many Barron Park residents—the Rice Thai Restaurant. Windows have been cut both on the front and the right side, and it looks much more welcoming than Armando's did 24 years ago.

The Island

The Island is a dismal looking place at 4141 ECR, in the triangular tip of the "island" created by the cutoff built in 1932. It probably looked about the same then as it does now, and in every year in between. It is currently occupied by Dan Brown's and is a classical



Photo L: La Cumbre building in 1996, two years after the restaurant closed.

neighborhood tavern and meeting place for young people. In spite of its low-life appearance, I believe that it has caused only a minimal amount of social trouble over the years.

Memories of Restaurant Row

I hope you have enjoyed this brief history of Barron Park's once-renowned Restaurant Row. One of the purposes of this article was to stimulate the memories of people who have been here since—or used to live here—in the heyday of the row.

I am currently engaged in the development of a database that will include; (1) business names and addresses, (2) owner's or manager's names (in some cases), (3) business founding and closing dates (when obtainable) and (4) other facts about the businesses along our stretch of ECR. It is a very large undertaking and will not be done quickly.

In parallel with my gathering of "just the facts," I would like to gather your personal stories about the strip. Please let me hear from you, by phone or e-mail or letter, or best yet in person, to tell me your memories of the restaurants and bars. If you have any matchbook covers or other memorabilia I would appreciate scanned copies. Future articles will cover the motels, gas stations, grocery stores and miscellaneous businesses on the strip.

Please Contact me at: Doug Graham, Barron Park Historian, 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto, CA 94306, 650-493-0689, dgraham-paca@gmail.com



Photo M: Armando's Lunch, Beer & Wine in 1985.

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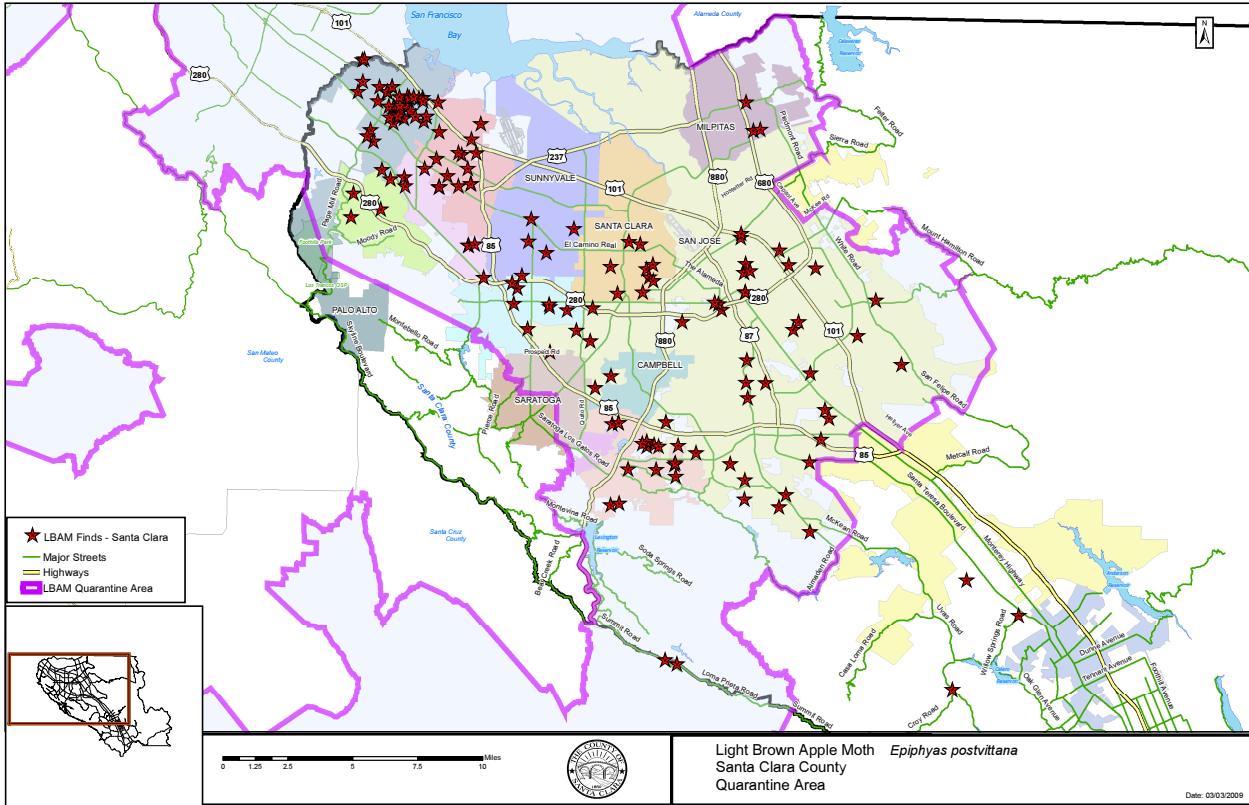
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Illustration K: El Rancho ad from Chaparral, December, 1957.

VECTOR CONTROL SPRING 2009

By Sue Luttner



about the animal's condition, and possibly send out a team to collect and test the carcass.

Glassy Winged Sharpshooter

The state-wide campaign against the glassy winged sharpshooter has also reached Santa Clara County, where three isolated infestations have been identified. The glassy winged sharpshooter is an agricultural pest from the southeastern US that's moved into the state in

Santa Clara County is now fighting three insect pests: light brown apple moths, mosquitoes, and glassy winged sharpshooters.

This winter and spring saw another doubling of the Light-Brown-Apple-Moth (LBAM) count in Santa Clara County: The tally in late May was 243 individuals captured; near the end of November 2008, the number was 101. Still, our infestation pales against the figures in San Francisco and Santa Cruz Counties, which have reported totals of 33,906 and 32,918, respectively, up from 17,287 and 24,452 in the fall.

The state has announced plans to begin test releases this year of sterile moths to disrupt LBAM mating, in an attempt to move away from controversial aerial spraying of pheromones in the most heavily infested counties. In the mean time, our neighborhood is in the LBAM quarantine zone: The State of California asks that we not move plants or plant parts, including bouquets, off our properties, even to a neighbor's house. Seeds, bulbs with no green matter, and peeled fruit or prepared foods from

the garden are OK to move.

The reason for the restriction, even within quarantine zones, is that an individual moth is likely to move only a few hundred yards in its lifetime. Human transportation of the eggs and larvae is the single greatest force spreading the pest through the state.

West Nile Virus

On the mosquito front, Santa Clara is one of only eight counties in the state that have recorded animal cases of West Nile Virus this year. No human cases have been reported so far in 2009, possible evidence that the state's eradication efforts—based on mosquito abatement—are showing results.

Mosquitoes pass the West Nile Virus among a range of hosts, primarily birds, squirrels, horses, and people. Birds are of special concern because they carry the disease into new territory. If you come across a freshly dead (less than 24 hours) and intact bird, report it immediately to the state through their web site at http://www.westnile.ca.gov/report_wnv.php. The vector control team will contact you

the past decade, destroying hundreds of acres of grapevines in southern California. So far, residents are not part of the eradication effort.

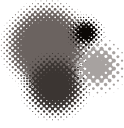
Key Things You Can Do About West Nile Virus

- Protect infants outside with netting in the evenings and early mornings, especially on lawns and near foliage
- Seek out and drain standing water on your property; change birdbaths at least weekly
- Stock ponds with mosquito fish, supplied free by the County. Call 408-918-4770 or submit your request through <http://www.sccgov.org/portal/site/vector/>
- Repair torn screens to keep mosquitoes outside

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