

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Lynnne Melena, BPA President

Living Near El Camino



El Camino Real is an integral part of Barron Park. Most of us pass by it every day, and almost everyone gets to his or her home by using one of the streets that branch off El Camino (although some use Arastradero).

I live one long block from El Camino Real. I have always thought that location had both its good points and its drawbacks. It's a little bit like living in a mixed use development—with businesses within a short walking distance. All American Market was the quintessential neighborhood business, and I could easily walk or bike to it. It was a neighborhood meeting place. Even Blockbuster served that purpose to some degree.

When Compadres was still open, we walked down Military Way and dashed across El Camino Real many times for dinner. (I did think it was almost humorous that at one time we could walk to five Mexican restaurants.) Now there are other local favorites where neighbors meet each other.

Also, living so close to El Camino, I could easily take the 22 bus to work on Castro Street—which I tried to do once a week. And, although I don't commute anymore, I have walked to and from the bus stop a number of times to start longer journeys—to the airport.

Unfortunately, El Camino also has some drawbacks. Some businesses don't seem to realize how they impact the neighborhoods behind them. I used to shortcut to El Camino by walking through the alley that runs parallel to El Camino, south from Military Way (this was to avoid the traffic congestion at the corner of El Camino and Military). But the alley is not a pleasant place to walk—despite the efforts of neighbors to clean it up.

Almost two years ago, neighbors on Magnolia, La Selva, Military and Barron joined together to file a protest against a new liquor license for "old" Ernie's Liquors. The previous proprietor of Ernie's had moved out and taken the store's name with him to the liquor store across Military Way (previously called A-1), which he also operated. The fact that "old" Ernie's would have new owners meant that they would have to apply to the ABC for a new license. (The license could not just be "transferred" as had happened many times in the past.)

This was our opportunity to make a change in the situation. We were tired of delivery trucks blocking both lanes of Military Way, parked cars sticking out into the roadway, cars suddenly backing out into the Military surprising motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists, overflowing trash, etc. These conditions had gotten worse as trucks got bigger, and this was our first op-

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 2]

Boy Scout Pack 52 Join the Fun!

By Jen Hess

Scouting provides excellent opportunities for boys starting as early as 1st grade. The values that scouting teaches are being: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. Programs are geared towards age appropriate activities that allow boys to make friendships, learn skills and become community citizens. Skills boys learn include things like: healthy eating, first aid, physical fitness, citizenship, and more.

Pack 52 meets at Juana Briones School. Our pack participates in community building activities like Scouting For Food. Scouting for Food is an opportunity for the boys to collect food from our neighbors to donate to those less in need. Our pack also has lots of fun. We go on outings like to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, sleep with the fishes at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, sleep on the USS Hornet and of course go camping.

In addition to outings, our pack holds the traditional Pinewood Derby. At the Derby kids are given a block of wood and the opportunity to craft it into any kind of car they can imagine. We then race the cars against each other at our Derby Race day!

If you are interested in learning more about Pack 52 and Boy Scouts, please contact me Jen Hess jen.hess@gmail.com.

INSIDE

3
Art in the Park

4
Barron Park History

6
Matadero Creek Water Level

7
Matadero Creek Geology

8
Thank You BPA Members & Donors

9
Barron Park Poets

[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

portunity to do something about it. (Code enforcement only goes so far.)

In the spring, the ABC gave the new owners of "old" Ernie's (now "E Liquors") an Interim Operating Permit. Late in July, the ABC finally scheduled a hearing before an administrative law judge to hear our protest. Nine of us went down to San Jose and spent about six hours in a room giving our testimony. Unlike the ABC and the liquor store applicants, we did not have a lawyer. So we stumbled a bit, but we made our case.

The judge will make a recommendation to the ABC later this year. For now, we neighbors have won some concessions, the main one being that alcohol deliveries to E Liquors cannot be made from Military Way. Trucks must use a loading zone on El Camino. Ironically, other large (non-liquor) delivery trucks can still use Military. Also, "new" Ernie's can still get all deliveries from Military.

Will things improve on our section of El Camino? I think they will—at least for a while. I do know that there would have

been no improvements if our little neighborhood hadn't decided that enough was enough, and hung together for almost two years, seeking our way through a complicated and arcane protest process. And the liquor store owners now know we are not just a few whiners. We are people who care about our surroundings.

The owners of "E Liquors" now say they want to be good neighbors. They said they would voluntarily lock their dumpster, put up a surveillance camera in the alley, prevent public usage of the worst of their substandard parking spaces and paint the back of the building (they had never gone around to the back to see what we neighbors see every day).

So, living near El Camino can be both good and bad. We definitely benefit from those El Camino businesses who care about Barron Park—supporting May Fete, giving us good rates on printing, providing meeting space and more. And we benefit by having businesses that we can walk to. There are ways for us to co-exist, as long as there is mutual respect.

BPA NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

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

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

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

PDF full color newsletter archive: www.bpaonline.org/bp-news/index.html

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 funds will be available for health concerns as the donkeys age. The handlers hope that those generous neighbors who have contributed in the past will consider increasing their support this year. Contributions for the donkeys' care may be sent to: The Palo Alto Donkey Project, ACTERRA (Action



for a 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.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Lynn Melena, President
- Art Liberman, Vice President
- Linda Elder, Secretary
- John King, Treasurer
- Markus Fromherz
- Nancy Hamilton
- Christian Kalar
- Lydia Kou
- Gwen Luce
- Doug Moran

Committee / Activity Chairs

Businesses Liaison: Markus Fromherz

Civic Affairs Liaison: Doug Moran

Parks & Creeks: Christian Kalar

Environmental: Art Liberman

Green Team: Lynn Melena

History: Doug Graham

Holiday Party: Vacant

May Fete: John King

Membership: Art Liberman

Neighborhood Safety & Preparedness:

Lydia Kou

Newsletter: Nancy Hamilton

Seniors Lunch: Bob Frost

Traffic & Streets: Vacant

Welcoming: Gwen Luce

Zoning & Land Use: Vacant

BPA meetings are held the 3rd

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

Call Lynn Melena for location: 493-2135

www.bpaonline.org

ART IN THE PARK—STEPHANIE LANGLEY

By Jen Hess

One of the greatest parts about writing a column like this is that I get to meet interesting people and learn about different forms of art. I feel privileged to be able to get this opportunity to learn more about the field and share what I learn with you.

On this particular occasion, I met Stephanie Langley at her home on Maybell Ave. I was greeted by her secluded magical garden in the front yard. In her front yard, you did not feel you were visiting a home on Maybell Ave., but rather a quiet, peaceful Eden. Stephanie, her home and her yard are very welcoming.

Stephanie's studio is located in a main part of her home, taking up a large portion of her downstairs area. This placement indicates how central art is to her life. It makes a lot of sense given that she that art is her business and her calling.

This multi-talented woman has many different mediums that she works with and different markets for each of her art styles: illustration, fine art, encaustics and assemblage. She approaches her work with a great love of the artistic process. By this, I mean that she loves to experiment and try new things. She seems to find joy when unexpected outcomes happen in her work.

Illustration

Stephanie no longer does illustration, but



that is the majority of the art examples you will find on her website. I learned that illustration as a business is one where you are given specific parameters. The artist is given manuscripts or other materials and some sense as to what the consumer wants.

In working with consumers in this fashion, you may end up doing several iterations of the same piece until the consumer is happy. You are commissioned up front for the illustration and then given a deadline and the goal for the illustration.

Fine Art

Stephanie defines the difference between illustration and fine art in the following way: "Illustration is narrative driven, while fine art is an internal conversation that may or may not be clear to the viewer." My understanding is that fine art is not something that is predefined by another person or entity. Fine art is something that comes from the artist's own desires so only has to fulfill the artist's goals.

Encaustics

I got the opportunity to see some photo encaustics during Open Studios, but never got the chance to find out what it was. I learned that encaustics are wax based. Due to the nature of the wax, they must be mounted on sturdy structures such as wood.

Given you start out with such a sturdy structure, many elements can be combined.

The wax allows you to layer different elements, be they vintage papers, found objects, cloth or any variety of things. Then you can create layers of wax deep enough that you can create incisions providing another layer of interest. It was fascinating to see what can be done with encaustics.

Assemblage

Assemblage appears to be a small sculpture using found pieces. The saying, "One person's junk is another's treasure," seems apt. Assemblage puts together things that others may no longer have a use for or that seem useless, in order to to make a new piece of art.

Stephanie starts her assemblage pieces with a block. Stephanie may paint or put vintage paper on the block. The treasures she has found and her mood dictate the growth of the piece. She does not start out with a set goal, but lets the parts speak to create the whole.



Not only does Stephanie create art in her home, but she also teaches art at Addison Elementary School. She focuses on three things: the elements of art and as many different media as she can. Given her love of trying new things, I can imagine she finds great joy in working with her students.

There are a few things that tie

Stephanie's work, using a variety of mediums, together. One is whimsy—"art that somehow injects a sense of humor into itself." Another is color. Stephanie tends to use colors that evoke a world of muted color.

Stephanie can be contacted at: [stephanie at langleyillustration dot com](mailto:stephanie@langleyillustration.com) and <http://langleyillustration.com>.

Barron Park History—Potpourri #2

By Douglas L. Graham, Barron Park Historian

Bits and Pieces from Many Sources

Many of the most interesting bits of neighborhood history have been related to me by readers, either in letters, e-mails, phone calls or in person at May Fetes, Welcoming Parties and other gatherings, especially when I have set up the history exhibit boards. In this article, I'm going to share some of these with you. They are not in any particular order, as befits something called a potpourri. It is entitled #2, as a similarly-named article was published in the Winter 2012 issue of this newsletter.

Commuter Railroad Timetable

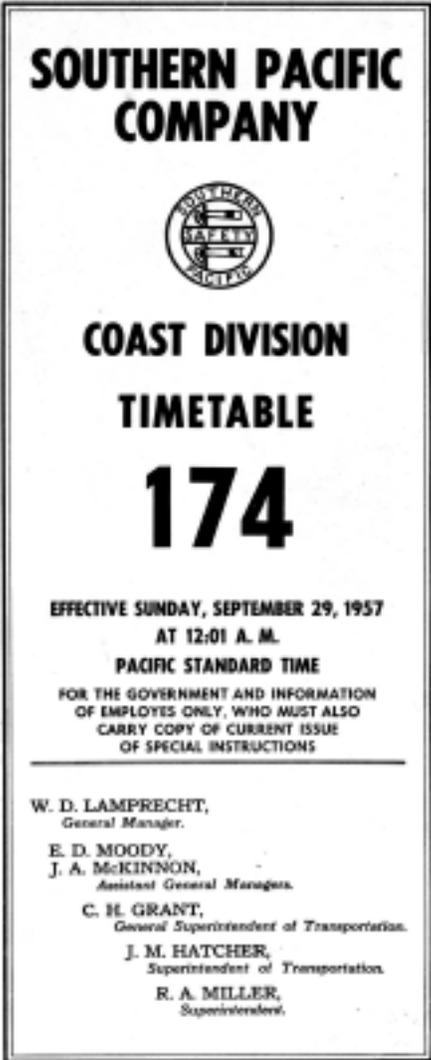


Illustration A: Timetable cover

EASTWARD				WESTWARD			
Time	182	184	186	188	190	192	194
	6:13	6:15	6:17	6:19	6:21	6:23	6:25
	6:26	6:28	6:30	6:32	6:34	6:36	6:38
	6:41	6:43	6:45	6:47	6:49	6:51	6:53
	6:58	7:00	7:02	7:04	7:06	7:08	7:10
	7:15	7:17	7:19	7:21	7:23	7:25	7:27
	7:32	7:34	7:36	7:38	7:40	7:42	7:44
	7:49	7:51	7:53	7:55	7:57	7:59	8:01
	8:06	8:08	8:10	8:12	8:14	8:16	8:18
	8:23	8:25	8:27	8:29	8:31	8:33	8:35
	8:40	8:42	8:44	8:46	8:48	8:50	8:52
	8:57	8:59	9:01	9:03	9:05	9:07	9:09
	9:14	9:16	9:18	9:20	9:22	9:24	9:26
	9:31	9:33	9:35	9:37	9:39	9:41	9:43
	9:48	9:50	9:52	9:54	9:56	9:58	10:00
	10:05	10:07	10:09	10:11	10:13	10:15	10:17
	10:22	10:24	10:26	10:28	10:30	10:32	10:34
	10:39	10:41	10:43	10:45	10:47	10:49	10:51
	10:56	10:58	11:00	11:02	11:04	11:06	11:08
	11:13	11:15	11:17	11:19	11:21	11:23	11:25
	11:30	11:32	11:34	11:36	11:38	11:40	11:42
	11:47	11:49	11:51	11:53	11:55	11:57	11:59
	12:04	12:06	12:08	12:10	12:12	12:14	12:16
	12:21	12:23	12:25	12:27	12:29	12:31	12:33
	12:38	12:40	12:42	12:44	12:46	12:48	12:50
	12:55	12:57	12:59	1:01	1:03	1:05	1:07
	1:12	1:14	1:16	1:18	1:20	1:22	1:24
	1:29	1:31	1:33	1:35	1:37	1:39	1:41
	1:46	1:48	1:50	1:52	1:54	1:56	1:58
	1:59	2:01	2:03	2:05	2:07	2:09	2:11
	2:16	2:18	2:20	2:22	2:24	2:26	2:28
	2:33	2:35	2:37	2:39	2:41	2:43	2:45
	2:50	2:52	2:54	2:56	2:58	3:00	3:02
	3:07	3:09	3:11	3:13	3:15	3:17	3:19
	3:24	3:26	3:28	3:30	3:32	3:34	3:36
	3:41	3:43	3:45	3:47	3:49	3:51	3:53
	3:58	4:00	4:02	4:04	4:06	4:08	4:10
	4:15	4:17	4:19	4:21	4:23	4:25	4:27
	4:32	4:34	4:36	4:38	4:40	4:42	4:44
	4:49	4:51	4:53	4:55	4:57	4:59	5:01
	5:06	5:08	5:10	5:12	5:14	5:16	5:18
	5:23	5:25	5:27	5:29	5:31	5:33	5:35
	5:40	5:42	5:44	5:46	5:48	5:50	5:52
	5:57	5:59	6:01	6:03	6:05	6:07	6:09
	6:14	6:16	6:18	6:20	6:22	6:24	6:26
	6:31	6:33	6:35	6:37	6:39	6:41	6:43
	6:48	6:50	6:52	6:54	6:56	6:58	7:00
	7:05	7:07	7:09	7:11	7:13	7:15	7:17
	7:22	7:24	7:26	7:28	7:30	7:32	7:34
	7:39	7:41	7:43	7:45	7:47	7:49	7:51
	7:56	7:58	8:00	8:02	8:04	8:06	8:08
	8:13	8:15	8:17	8:19	8:21	8:23	8:25
	8:30	8:32	8:34	8:36	8:38	8:40	8:42
	8:47	8:49	8:51	8:53	8:55	8:57	8:59
	9:04	9:06	9:08	9:10	9:12	9:14	9:16
	9:21	9:23	9:25	9:27	9:29	9:31	9:33
	9:38	9:40	9:42	9:44	9:46	9:48	9:50
	9:55	9:57	9:59	10:01	10:03	10:05	10:07
	10:12	10:14	10:16	10:18	10:20	10:22	10:24
	10:29	10:31	10:33	10:35	10:37	10:39	10:41
	10:46	10:48	10:50	10:52	10:54	10:56	10:58
	11:03	11:05	11:07	11:09	11:11	11:13	11:15
	11:20	11:22	11:24	11:26	11:28	11:30	11:32
	11:37	11:39	11:41	11:43	11:45	11:47	11:49
	11:54	11:56	11:58	12:00	12:02	12:04	12:06
	12:11	12:13	12:15	12:17	12:19	12:21	12:23
	12:28	12:30	12:32	12:34	12:36	12:38	12:40
	12:45	12:47	12:49	12:51	12:53	12:55	12:57
	13:02	13:04	13:06	13:08	13:10	13:12	13:14
	13:19	13:21	13:23	13:25	13:27	13:29	13:31
	13:36	13:38	13:40	13:42	13:44	13:46	13:48
	13:53	13:55	13:57	13:59	14:01	14:03	14:05
	14:10	14:12	14:14	14:16	14:18	14:20	14:22
	14:27	14:29	14:31	14:33	14:35	14:37	14:39
	14:44	14:46	14:48	14:50	14:52	14:54	14:56
	15:01	15:03	15:05	15:07	15:09	15:11	15:13
	15:18	15:20	15:22	15:24	15:26	15:28	15:30
	15:35	15:37	15:39	15:41	15:43	15:45	15:47
	15:52	15:54	15:56	15:58	16:00	16:02	16:04
	16:09	16:11	16:13	16:15	16:17	16:19	16:21
	16:26	16:28	16:30	16:32	16:34	16:36	16:38
	16:43	16:45	16:47	16:49	16:51	16:53	16:55
	17:00	17:02	17:04	17:06	17:08	17:10	17:12
	17:17	17:19	17:21	17:23	17:25	17:27	17:29
	17:34	17:36	17:38	17:40	17:42	17:44	17:46
	17:51	17:53	17:55	17:57	17:59	18:01	18:03
	18:08	18:10	18:12	18:14	18:16	18:18	18:20
	18:25	18:27	18:29	18:31	18:33	18:35	18:37
	18:42	18:44	18:46	18:48	18:50	18:52	18:54
	18:59	19:01	19:03	19:05	19:07	19:09	19:11
	19:16	19:18	19:20	19:22	19:24	19:26	19:28
	19:33	19:35	19:37	19:39	19:41	19:43	19:45
	19:50	19:52	19:54	19:56	19:58	20:00	20:02
	20:07	20:09	20:11	20:13	20:15	20:17	20:19
	20:24	20:26	20:28	20:30	20:32	20:34	20:36
	20:41	20:43	20:45	20:47	20:49	20:51	20:53
	20:58	21:00	21:02	21:04	21:06	21:08	21:10
	21:15	21:17	21:19	21:21	21:23	21:25	21:27
	21:32	21:34	21:36	21:38	21:40	21:42	21:44
	21:49	21:51	21:53	21:55	21:57	21:59	22:01
	22:06	22:08	22:10	22:12	22:14	22:16	22:18
	22:23	22:25	22:27	22:29	22:31	22:33	22:35
	22:40	22:42	22:44	22:46	22:48	22:50	22:52
	22:57	22:59	23:01	23:03	23:05	23:07	23:09
	23:14	23:16	23:18	23:20	23:22	23:24	23:26
	23:31	23:33	23:35	23:37	23:39	23:41	23:43
	23:48	23:50	23:52	23:54	23:56	23:58	24:00

Illustration B: Timetable excerpt.

Barron Park “old-timers” often speak of the railroads that ran through the neighborhood on the right-of-way now occupied by the Regional Bike Path. They reminisce about fathers, husbands and friends who commuted to jobs in San Francisco by hopping on a commuter train that could be flagged to stop at Neal Station. Neal was located where Laguna Avenue ends by intersecting with Matadero Avenue. It was a tiny open-faced shed like a rural school bus stop. We have long had a photograph of the small shelter, and now we also have documentary evidence of its existence. See illustrations A (timetable cover) and B (excerpt from page 11).

The small box labeled “Additional Stations” shows Neal, Station 501 at milepost 33.0, the first stop going south (“Eastward”) from California Avenue. If you interpolate the times, the “6:01 PM” train out of California Avenue must have stopped at Neal about 6:13 or 6:04 (assuming it had a passenger who wanted to detrain at Barron Park). If you are interested you could do the same thing to estimate stopping times for the other trains.

Thanks are due to Eric Struck for allowing me (in 2010) to scan

parts of his copy of the Southern Pacific Company’s Coast Division Timetable 174, effective Sunday, September 29, 1957. It is an interesting and valuable addition to the Barron Park historical archives.

The Mercury Vapor Lamp

Readers of this newsletter (or viewers of the Barron Park history exhibit that I usually set up at May Fetes and Welcoming Parties in the park) will remember reading about Mr. Cornelis Bol of Roble Ridge, for whom Bol Park is named. Mr. Bol has often been referred to as the inventor of the mercury vapor lamp, alleged to be the brightest known source of artificial lighting. Well, thanks to Brian George, a member of the board of the Palo Alto Historical Association (PAHA), we now have several photographs of the lamp.

In early 2010, Brian checked out a website that offered to put your photograph or drawing on soft magnetic sheet stock to make a refrigerator magnet. The website owner, Judy Cooke of Elkhart, Indiana, sent Brian an envelope with two photo magnets, each print about 3 1/2” X 4”. The lamp photo (see illustration C) was in color—it is actually a “trading” card from a 1930s-era cigarette promotion). There was also a good black-and-white of Mr. Bol working at a desk or laboratory table (see illustration D). Brian passed these magnets to me and I set them aside until the next

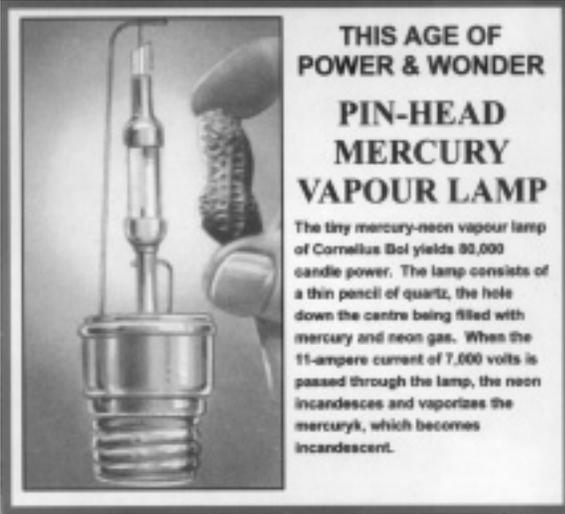


Illustration C: Pin-head mercury vapor lamp.



Illustration D: Cornelis Bol.

time I would be writing about the Bols—which time has now arrived. In February 2011, I e-mailed Ms. Cooke to find out if she had any more photos or information about Cornelis. Bingo!

It turns out that the black-and-white photo was from the April 3, 1939 issue of *Life* magazine. Readers over the age of 50 will all remember *Life*—it was an illustrated magazine of great popularity and large circulation throughout the 1940s and '50s. The Smithsonian Institute has this magazine on their website and I was able to copy the story on page 46 about Mr. Bol and his miraculous lamps. The passages below are taken from that article.

SCIENCE

Midget Lamp Throws Beam of Reading Light a Mile

Cornelis Bol, a Dutch-born scientist of Stanford University, has spent the last 3 years decreasing the size of a mercury vapor lamp while increasing its brilliancy. Result is a “midget sun” that has been made in two sizes. Hardly longer than a wooden match, one of the lamps clearly illuminated a man getting into a car at a distance of 500 feet, (and) made it possible to read a paper at one mile from the light source.

A mercury vapor lamp produces light because the atoms in the vapor give off light energy when an electric current passes through it. The greater the number of atoms, the greater the amount of light emitted. Hence Mr. Bol packs his midget lamps with mercury atoms under terrifically

high pressure (up to 200,000 Lb. per sq. in.). To prevent the lamp from bursting and to keep it cool, he envelops it with a solid glass jacket in which water circulates under high pressure.

Now being manufactured by the General Electric Co., the Bol lamp can be used for movie projectors, search-lights, photoengraving and other applications where strong, concentrated beam of light is needed.”

A 1923 Directory

Joyce McClure, another PAHA board member recently found on the internet a reprint of the 1923 Hall Directory of Palo Alto, Mayfield, Runnymede and Stanford

University (Runnymede was the area now covered by East Palo Alto and the eastern part of Menlo Park).

The old City Directories are marvelous sources of information about businesses, people and addresses without any direct equivalent today. This 1923 Hall Directory is a good example. The first section is a business directory, a rough equivalent of the yellow pages, but simpler.

Second is a “directory of Palo Alto streets and houses by numbers”. For instance;

Addison Avenue, (it runs) northeast from Alma street to Channing lane.

123 - Truesdell, Clarence

151 - Owen, M. L.

161 - Leahy, Austin J.

181 - Fortune, Mrs. C. B.

Etc., etc.

Unfortunately for historians of Barron Park, our neighborhood didn't exist at the time this book was published. There were only a few scattered houses and Hall's didn't cover rural areas.

It is amusing to read that “Many of the houses in Mayfield are not numbered, a condition which makes it impossible to give more than the name of the street upon which the house is located.”

The True Spelling of La Para Avenue

By the way—I finally re-located the documentary evidence that La Para was originally spelled “La Pera”, a Spanish noun meaning “Pear” in English. I don't know

when La Pera was laid out, but it might have been there in 1925—several La Para houses have “first built” dates of 1925. On the other hand, it does not show on the 1926 plat map...But, in any case, the 1940 Polk's Directory (the first one to cover Barron Park addresses) spells it “La Pera”. The street was laid out in a section covered with pear orchards. “La Para”, on the other hand, is faux Spanish—it is meaningless. Sometime after 1940, some ignorant but probably well-meaning soul changed the spelling and since then, we've been stuck with it.

More Residents Join the 50-Year Club

In Potourri #1, I noted that Marion Mohr has lived on Florales Drive in the Encina Grande Tract for more than 61 years, and I asked readers to write me about other residents who have reached or exceeded the 50-year mark in our neighborhood.

John Dusterberry e-mailed me with this message; “My wife and I moved to 882 La Para shortly after I got out of the Navy in the summer of 1946. On February 23, 1953 we moved into our new house at 4040 El Cerrito Road. I have lived in Barron Park for something over 65 years, almost 59 years of it in my present residence.”

Barbara Traynor chatted for a few minutes with me at the 2012 May Fete in Bol Park. She reminded me that she has lived on Laguna Court since 1951—61 years

Iris Chen has lived in her house on Ilima Way since 1961, when she moved in with her now-late husband Reno—51 years now.

Do You Have Something to Contribute?

If you have anything to add to the growing collection of Barron Park reminiscences (or if you just want to comment on them), please contact me at; Douglas L. Graham, *dgrahampaca@gmail.com*, 984 Ilima Way, Palo Alto 94306, 650-493-0689

EMAIL LISTS

The BPA has four email lists: bpa-news, bpa-issues, bpa-misc and bpa-job-postings. They are hosted at Google Groups. 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.”

Why Matadero Creek Stopped Flowing in June

Probably More Than You Ever Wanted to Know About the Discharge of Treated Groundwater into Matadero Creek

By Art Liberman



Late last June, there was a sudden, overnight drop in water level in Matadero Creek. Several creekside residents noticed the change, which lasted for two days, and sent out emails questioning what could possibly be the cause.

The answer is that it is partly natural and partly the result of human activities. The flow of water in Matadero Creek naturally falls off during the summer months as runoff from rains decreases and the natural springs dry up. A very small flow is visible now where the creek emerges from Stanford open space, crosses under Foothill Expressway, just south of Page Mill Road, and enters the Stanford Research Park. But there is a larger flow downstream, where the creek winds its way alongside Bol Park. There's been a flow there for some years even during the summer months, so the sudden decline at the end of June was a surprise.

So, the questions are: in these dry months, What's the source of the flow downstream in Matadero Creek during the summer months, and

Why was there a sudden drop in the water level during several days at the end of June?

The answer to the first question is that water is continually discharged into the creek from five groundwater treatment systems in the Research Park. These treatment systems, operating for well over a decade, are part of a State-mandated remediation program to clean up the groundwater contamination that came from leaking underground tanks holding chemical solvents at a dozen or so company sites in the Research Park. The tanks were removed long ago, and the companies that put them in the ground are gone also (except for HP and Varian), but the contamination they caused remains. The remediation process involves pumping contaminated water from wells, extracting the chemical contaminants in treatment systems and then discharging the cleansed water (under permits from the State) into Matadero Creek. Cleaning up the groundwater is difficult



and slow, and the remediation process continues, with no end yet in sight.

Most of the treatment systems are located in compounds near Hillview Avenue and Porter Drive. One of these is dedicated to treating the water from the 'Hillview Porter Plume,' the area where contamination spread into the groundwater beyond the Research Park, into the VA property and Barron Park itself. Another, at 3400 Hillview Ave., is on the foothill side of Matadero Creek, across the Expressway, on the Stanford Research Park property currently undergoing construction and redevelopment by VMware (previously Roche). Water treated there is piped back under Foothill Expressway and discharged into Matadero Creek on the University Club property.

The answer to the second question, why the sudden drop in the water level in the creek at the end of June, may be due to a two-day shutdown of the 3400 Hillview Ave treatment system. The senior engineer in charge of this project, Brenda Ma of Arcadis, Inc., said there was an "unplanned shutdown" of the treatment system for

two days when electrical power was shut off, presumably associated with construction activity. This shutdown happened just when the sudden drop in Matadero Creek level was observed. The engineers in charge of the other treatment systems reported that they were all operating normally during this period. The 3400 Hillview Ave. system currently treats and discharges more water than any of the others, almost half of the total amount.

The treatment systems are required, by conditions of their permits, to measure and monitor any contamination in the water discharged into the creek and also report the amount of water discharged on a quarterly basis to the State Water Resources Control Board. I looked at these records, which are online at the state's Geotracker website, and summed the total discharges of water per month from January 2011 through March 2012. The results are in graph A.

The graph shows some curious month-to-month ups and downs, seen in the records of several discharge systems, and an overall slow decline. Some of the factors at

Graph A: Monthly Amount of Water Discharged into Matadero Creek January 2011 through March 2012



play are:

- 1) Rainfall. This may be responsible for the big bump in the graph for April 2011. The slight decrease over the year may also be a consequence of the drop in the groundwater level as the warm weather set in.
- 2) Change in the number of wells in service. As the area requiring remediation shrinks extraction wells are shut down. At other times, some wells are put back into service.
- 3) Long-term problems with extraction wells or treatment plants. The decrease in February 2012 was a result of the failure of the pump for the horizontal well in the VA hospital site in the "Hillview-Porter Plume." This well alone produces about half the water discharged by that treatment system. The pump was not replaced for two months. Once it was, I was told by the chief geologist/engineer, Bruce Scarbrough of Stantec, Inc, the amounts recovered to pre-failure levels.

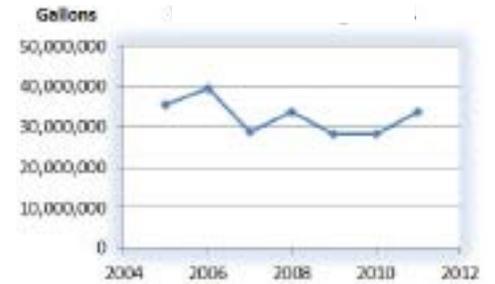
The discharge ranges from 2 to 3 million gallons a month, with a slow decrease over the course of the year. It is difficult to grasp a number of that size. A flow of 3 million gallons/month is about 70 gallons/minute. That's not huge. A typical bathroom or kitchen faucet fixture can pass from 4 to 7 gallons/minute. I actually went down to the creek bed near the stairs in mid-August and roughly measured the stream flow using a plastic container of known volume and a watch.

At that time, most of the water was flowing in several small cascades over notches in one of the small barriers in place across the creek bed (seen in the photo). I chose one which I guessed had about 1/3 of the total. My measurement gave a total stream flow of about 40 gallons/minute. While very rough, this is "in the ballpark" of the total amount of water discharged from the treatment systems.

I also looked at the total annual water discharged by these systems since 2005, when records were first posted online. The results are in graph B.

The total flow seems to be slowly decreasing, but the graph hides a number of factors. Some treatment systems are discharging much less water than they did in past years—possibly because of fewer wells are in service or the water level has dropped after years of pumping from these wells—while others are about con-

Graph B: Amount of Water Discharged into Matadero Creek each year from 2005 through 2011



stant. Also, an additional treatment system came online at the end of 2010, causing the spike upward in 2011. By comparison to the 30 million or so gallons discharged per year, Palo Alto's Regional Water Quality Control plant treats and discharges about 20 million gallons/day.

In summary, the amount of flow of water from the extraction systems into Matadero Creek can—and will—vary. There are no requirements for the sites to discharge a certain amount into the Creek; the amount is a simply byproduct of the remediation program.

For those of you who have read this far, you might be interested in the article about the Matadero Creek water level by Sue Dremann, "Matadero Creek dry-out puzzles residents" on August 16 for the Palo Alto Online.

MATADERO CREEK GEOLOGY

By Douglas Moran



Matadero Creek presents the only surface signs of two ancient earthquake faults under Barron Park. The Stanford Fault crosses

the creek in the vicinity of Julie Court, which also happens to be home to some of our avid creek-watchers. The Hanover Fault runs roughly along Laguna. These faults produced massive folds in the sediments that carry groundwater (sand and gravel) and the impermeable layers (compacted clay) that separate these aquifers. You get a sense of how big these folds can

be by looking to the VA Campus—it sits on top of a rise, followed by a small dip—and guessing that that contour was the result of a fault (the Pulgas Fault). All these faults are estimated to be 750,000 to 1.6 million years old (see the USGS "California Quaternary Faults" web pages for details).

The manifestation of this folding is the creek rapidly shifting between "gaining" and "losing" segments. In a losing segment, creek water is percolating into the groundwater. This can be very gradual, or it may be readily apparent to the casual observer. In a gaining segment, ground water may not just be rising up through

the creek bed, but seeping out of its banks if the water table is high enough. However, this is usually hidden by the plants that thrive on that extra water. Complicating observations is that sometimes the water is simply flowing *through* the gravel of creek bed instead of above it—I have seen several places where the flow abruptly disappears and reemerges over a distance of tens of feet.

The folds from the faults played a positive and negative role in the spread of the toxic released that occurred in the Research Park. One fold created a barrier between [CONTINUED ON PAGE 8]

[MATADERO CREEK GEOLOGY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7]

the shallow ground water under the Research Park sites and the shallow ground water under Barron Park. However, the some of the contaminants bypassed this barrier by travelling down the creek. They entered the creek from the shallow ground water in a gaining segment, flowed to a losing segment where they spread away from the creek through the groundwater. The cleanup of the contaminants within Barron Park was completed years ago, but the mapping of their spread revealed interesting details of the geology.

The hydrology of the Santa Clara Valley has changed tremendously in the past 50 years. When this was still a predominantly agricultural region, free-flowing artesian wells were common. Aquifers that were charged in the mountains surfaced in various places in the valley and that elevation difference produced enough pressure that no pumping was needed. However, many of these wells failed because the aquifers were damaged by overuse.

It is hard to even guess about what is hap-

pening with flows in Matadero Creek because there are so many factors at play, and the data is so sketchy. During the Rancho era, we know that there were significant, reliable flows in the summer because it was a prime location for a camps for rounding up and slaughtering cattle (for San Francisco), hence its name. The current flows would not support the needs of the cowboys, their horses, and the gathered cattle.

Before that, there is archeological evidence of permanent encampments on the creek at the VA. It is hypothesized that this was a favorable location: Close enough to the bay to eat what comes from it, but far enough to not be eaten by what comes from it (mosquitoes).

Recharging the ground water that eventually finds its way to the creek is not simply a matter of the amount of rainfall. For example, if too much rain falls in a short interval, the top layer of the ground gets saturated and most of the water flows to the bay. But development also diverts water to the bay instead of into the ground:

Hard surfaces such as buildings, streets and parking lots don't just cover ground that could absorb the rain, but they often direct the water to storm drains even when the surrounding ground could easily absorb it.

Suburban landscaping practices could be a factor. When lush landscapes were popular, the accompanying overwatering probably added to the groundwater. But the current "water-wise" practices may hurt because they support a heavier load of vegetation which exists not just on the irrigation but on the shallow groundwater, thus "harvesting" rainfall that in earlier times would have moved into the aquifers.

But what about Barron Creek? It is an entirely different type of creek, one that is driven almost entirely by runoff, with negligible contribution from the groundwater. If you look at old maps, you will see it, and many other creeks in the area, simply designated "Dry Creek". They were dry during most of the year, including the periods in the rainy season between rainfall.

Thank You to all our Members and our Generous Donors

By Art Liberman, Membership Chair

The Barron Park Association is the envy of many community associations in our area. Out of the approximately 1500 residences in Barron Park, over 400 voluntarily pay dues each year to support our activities. This is a testament to your willingness to support our mission of "building community" by bringing neighbors together and enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

While this is remarkable, what makes Barron Park truly extraordinary is the amazing outpouring of support from members who donate to the Barron Park Association some amount in addition to their basic dues. Approximately 1/3 of our members contribute more than the \$20/year (\$10/year senior) membership dues. This year we received approximately \$3700 in donations.

We rely on annual dues to help us with publication and mailing costs, internet

hosting fees, insurance, organizing events and other charges. Much of the nitty gritty organizational work is done by a dedicated group of unpaid volunteers. But, even so, our membership dues are not sufficient to support all of our activities. To all of you who donated an additional amount, we say thank you; we are only able to accomplish our mission because of the extra support we receive from people like you!

We are most well-known for fostering communication within our community through our several email lists and our widely acclaimed newsletter. Look for our completely revamped website to be released to the community soon that will provide online access to information and updates on various activities in the neighborhood! We have many other important activities. They include being stewards of our environment, our parks and creeks,

and preserving our unique neighborhood character. We are respected and listened to by City leaders when we stand before them to represent the interests and concerns of our neighborhood. We also support the efforts to educate and prepare residents in our neighborhood in the event of a major natural disaster. And of course there is our May Fete, our annual family gathering, which the neighborhood recently celebrated its 37th annual occurrence on a magnificent day in Bol Park.

To all our members: we hope we will continue to demonstrate to you that we value your support and that we use it wisely. As ever, we value your input, your suggestions and your ideas for improving our organization. We belong to a community and we have to keep working at "building community." Please let us know if there are activities we can do better, or ones we ought to initiate.

BARRON PARK POETS

There once was an astronomer who counted,
And counted and counted and counted.
So many stars—an infinity, oh my,
And she counted and counted and counted.

There once was a bronco who bucked
While he counted the stars in the sky,
Star, buck, star, buck, star, buck—two infinities, oh my,
And he counted and counted and counted.

—Martin Stone

There once was a Baron named Park
Who wrote half a poem on a lark
His mylar balloon
Flew up towards the moon
And left all his friends in the dark

—Sean Arthur

There once was a donkey named Perry
Who was anything but scary
He'd stay in his pen
Despite his yen
To fly away like a canary.

There once was another donkey named Mickey
Whose appetite was a little bit finicky
He'd look at his hay
For most of the day
But thought mainly about his hickey.

There once was yet another donkey named Miner
Who walked into a bar which gave him a shiner.
To cheer him up
We picked him up
And fed him dinner at a diner.

Lucky for y'all,
There are only 3 donkeys...

—Mike Naar

North County Santa Clara, Winter 2010

By Shirley Gaines

They walked naked, the Ohlone men, in what is now our back yard. The women wove skirts, adorned their ears with shells...before apricot orchards, or Hewlett and Packard. Before we, and all the others, arrived for the Space Age.

I open my door, stepping into a drift of pink—petals, like snow, blown from the huge plum tree in back. Next door, the nanny has parked her SUV, she lugs tonight's dinner in cloth bags. Our French neighbors are green.

Bonjour. Bonjour. They've rented from East Indians who moved back to Mumbai before giving me the name of the market that sells fenugreek and tamarind. Gone—the mother-in-law who cooked in her saffron sari.

I drive three blocks to El Camino Real, the Royal Road, turn right onto the street where you can find everything. The Lanai flower shop, there only three weeks ago so changed, as if not one board is left. Not a single nail.

The crossing guard, with a single hand, flaunts her power. A tide of traffic halts, obeys that arm: up-lifted, black. Teenage boys saunter to the other side. You wonder what force, what glue, holds up their pants.

Swarthened men clump in twos and threes, watching, waiting for someone to stop, take them for a few hours to a job, that pays

enough for rent, tortillas, then some to send home.

Past Trader Vic's to Trader Joe's for ripe avocados, reminding me of a dead poet. I buy flowers out of season, then retrace my way: Lockheed, Stanford, the VA. filled with a kind of grace this deep in winter day.

From where does this green yearning come?
So much has changed, yet this place is home.

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

■
Barron Park Association
724 Barron Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94306

EDITOR

Nancy "Jo" Hamilton

DESIGNER

Patrick Coyne

COPY EDITORS

Gwen Luce, Lynn Melena,
Doug Moran

CONTRIBUTORS

Douglas L. Graham, Jen Hess,
Art Liberman, Lynn Melena,
Douglas Moran

BARRON PARK ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
FALL 2012

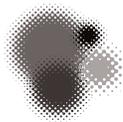
■
www.bpaonline.org
724 Barron Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94306

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PALO ALTO, CA
PERMIT NO. 143

BARRON PARK'S LOCAL COPY SHOP

DESKTOP PUBLISHING • LARGE FORMAT
SELF SERVICE ON 100% RECYCLED PAPER
LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED

**Professional • Friendly • Reliable
Affordable • Convenient**



**Copy
Factory**

650.856.2020 • copyfactory.com
3929 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

Between Los Robles and Ventura, next to Star One

B&W • COLOR COPIES • FULL BINDERY



B&D Painting Co.

Specialized in Residential

Brad Johnson
650.380.4335

Dan Kieninger
650.465.0749

Bonded/Insured CA Lic. 931158

NEW HOMES FOR SALE

*"Sellers normally pay the commission,
When we pay cash for your home you can save
up to 6%"*



JAMES WITT

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

TEL: 650.494.2041

WWW.JAMESWITT.COM

YOUR AD HERE—\$200

In the spring BPA Newsletter, which goes to almost 1600 BP households.

Your \$50 BPA business membership gives you one FREE ad like the ones above (one per year)
in any other quarterly edition of our BPA Newsletter.

Ad size = 1 Col. by 2 1/4"

(Deadlines Mar. 1st, June 1st, Sept. 1st, Dec. 1st)

Send your ad electronically. No proofs given. We reserve the right to reject any ads we deem inappropriate.

Email: BPAonline.org/411/njh.html