

# Berkeley's PATHS

A Newsletter of the Berkeley Path Wanderers Association, Fall 2003 Vol. 6 No. 3

*Berkeley Path Wanderers Association is a grassroots volunteer group of community members who have come together to increase public awareness of the City of Berkeley's pathways. BPWA hopes to accomplish this goal through volunteer-led path walks, identification and accurate mapping of Berkeley's complete path network, and eventual restoration of paths that have been blocked or obscured.*

## Meetings **Live Oak Park Rec. Center**

**7-9 pm 1200 Shattuck Ave (unless noted)**

### Sept. 18 **Annual Meeting**

**AT THE HILLSIDE CLUB**

**2286 Cedar Street**

**Hidden Walks**

**by author Stephen Altschuler**

Elections for two new board members will precede the talk

### Oct 16 **Board Meeting**

### Nov 20 **General Meeting**

**Personal Stories on the Paths**

## Path Walks **RAIN OR SHINE**

**Saturdays at 10:00 am (allow 2-3 hours)**

**Sept 13** Historic Pathway up Charter Hill  
**Steve Finacom stuart60@pacbell.net**  
**Meet on campus outside Wurster Hall**

**Oct 25** Paths of Northern-most Berkeley  
**Marilyn Siegel 549-2908**  
**Mardi Mertens 849-1142**  
**Meet at Ensenada and Portland Avenues**

**Nov 15** Paths of Oakland's Trestle Glen Area  
**Jason Patton 637-0191**  
**or jpatton@oaklandnet.com**  
**We will begin by talking about Oakland's streetcar history before riding the bus to the residential neighborhood.**  
**Meet at the corner of 9th & Washington in Old Oakland. (Take BART to 12th St. Station)**

## Stephen Altschuler, Author of "Hidden Walks..." Talks at the Hillside Club September 18<sup>th</sup>

On September 18th, Stephen Altschuler—a writer, counselor, consultant, and perhaps above all, a walker and hiker—will talk about the history of Berkeley's pathways at the Hillside Club. He'll discuss some of the individuals, such as Maybeck, Julia Morgan, and Keeler, who influenced the look of the neighborhoods, and discuss the significance of early Hillside Club members, as well as early landscape architects, in shaping the streets and paths.

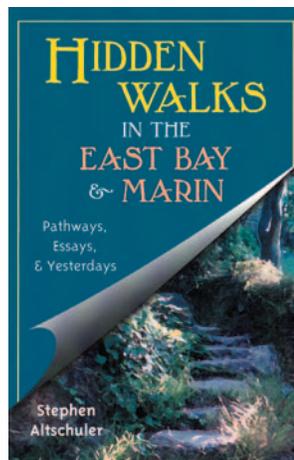
He'll show slides of the East Bay and Southern Marin, presenting images of urban creeks, waterfalls and hidden hiking trails within the city limits.

Historical photos will be shown too.

Since 1969, he has published many features and essays in regional and national magazines, and is the author of four books, including: *Hidden Walks in the Bay Area*, and *Sacred Paths and Muddy Places—Rediscovering Spirit in Nature*. His

fifth book, *On the Trail to Find Out—Where the Beaten Trail Fades and the Mindful Path Appears* will be published in June 2004.

It is a multi-faceted account of Stephen's relationship with a wilderness trail in Point Reyes National Seashore, covering the past 20 years. He lives in Sonoma County.



## September 13<sup>th</sup> Walk: Charter Hill & the Big "C"

This walk covers more than a century of UC history, starting with a stroll through a 19th century residential neighborhood now part of the campus, including a home visited by Jack London. Next, the Greek Theatre, 100 years old this month. Then a climb along the historic "Big C Trail" route, overlooks of

Memorial Stadium and Strawberry Canyon and, finally, the Big "C" itself, built as a symbol of student unity in 1905; the giant concrete letter overlooking Berkeley is the oldest feature of its type in the Western American landscape. Views are spectacular (bring a camera!)—

*continued on back*

**BPWA**  
**1442A Walnut Street, #269**  
**Berkeley, CA 94709**

### Board Members

JACQUE ENSIGN, chair  
PAT DE VITO, co-chair  
ELEANOR GIBSON, recording secretary  
SUE FERNSTROM, treasurer  
KAREN KEMP, newsletter  
JAY CROSS, webmaster  
CHARLIE BOWEN  
TOM EDWARDS  
LISA FRIEDAN  
ALAN KAPLAN  
EMMA MORRIS  
SUSAN SCHWARTZ  
HELEN WYNNNE

## Charles Keeler: Civic Leader, Mistaken Biologist, Bad Poet

Charles Keeler (1871-1937) recently came to the notice of more Americans than ever knew his name before. He was cited as a member of the Harriman Alaska Expedition of 1899 in an article in the June 2003 issue of *Smithsonian*. Described as “Poet Charles Keeler,” he was also a qualified biologist, one of several on this expedition that included John Muir, John Burroughs, and Louis Agassiz Fuertes (the Audubon of his day). Keeler had been the director of the natural history museum of the California Academy of Sciences (hired in 1891 at the age of 20) and a USDA biologist sent to Lake Tahoe to study birds and mammals in 1889 (while still a student at Berkeley High)!

BPWA members know Keeler best for his contributions to the Hillside Club (President, 1903-1905) and his association with architect Bernard Maybeck: Keeler’s home was Maybeck’s first private commission. Keeler wrote *The Simple Home* (1904) to express his philosophy that the home was a shelter which, when it fostered a better family life, improved the community as well. He encouraged a simple, unadorned (unpainted, even) style of wooden house, with better carpentry and joinery than that seen in the overly decorated Queen Anne/Eastlake style, with sunbursts on pediments, mechanically-produced bargeboard details, “gim-cracks and geegaws.” In the Hillside Club yearbook of 1906-07, he wrote,

“hillside architecture is landscape gardening around a few rooms for use in case of rain.” You can still see the wonderful “few rooms” that Maybeck designed and built for Keeler’s family on Highland Place in Berkeley.

Charles Keeler is forgotten as a biologist because his book, *Evolution of the Colors of North American Land Birds* (1893) came down on the wrong side of the debate about inheritance of acquired traits. Keeler, along with most American biologists of the time, took the “Neo-Lamarckian” position that, somehow, traits acquired during a bird’s lifetime could pass to its offspring. The re-discovery of Mendel’s laws of heredity was still 7 years away.

Keeler is also forgotten as a poet. Unfortunately for him, he was an almost exact contemporary of William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), arguably the greatest poet writing in English in the first decades of the 20th century. Yeats, William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, Siegfried Sassoon and the other British War Poets, the Russian Symbolists and many others turned away from the late Victorian romantic style that Keeler continued to write in. His 1919 *Sequoia Sonnets* is full of archaic constructions (“heaeth,” “cometh,” “nigh,” “o’er” and the like).

Keeler was a “booster” of the Bay Area who was director (manager?) of the Berkeley Chamber of Commerce, 1920-27. He lived on El Camino Real in the Claremont Hills neighborhood

of Berkeley (behind today’s John Muir School), and died there in 1937. In his later years, he became a religious visionary; in his *An Epitome of Cosmic Religion* (1925) he referred to himself as “the founder of Cosmic Religion.”

An article in the Berkeley Daily Gazette in 1949 called Keeler, “Berkeley’s Forgotten Man.” If not for Dimitri Shipounoff’s introduction to the 1979 reprint of *The Simple Home*, we would not have what little detail of Keeler’s life I’ve recounted here.

by Alan Kaplan



### Berkeley Paths Notecards Will be on Sale at the Solano Stroll

BPWA now has blank greeting cards for sale at \$6.50 for a set of four cards. Each set includes watercolors of **Billie Jean Walk, Visalia Steps, The Cut-Off, and Fountain Walk** by artist, Karen Kemp. Buy them at BPWA’s booth at the Solano Stroll—#1597 near Ordway. A portion of the sales will benefit BPWA’s path improvements. See our website for details.

### Board Elections September 18

Please come to our annual meeting **September 18<sup>th</sup>** at the hillside Club, and vote for two new board members.



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

## September 13<sup>th</sup> Charter Hill Walk *continued*

the natural world at hand, and the history extensive and varied.

Steven Finacom, local historian and University staff member, leads the tour.

Gather at 10:00 a.m. sharp at the plaza West of **Wurster Hall** on campus (look for the triangular wooden sculpture). Bring water and wear good

climbing shoes; we go up a steep dirt trail, and gain 400 feet in elevation.

The UC Foothill Parking Lot (\$7 public parking) is closest to the end of the walk. Drive Hearst Avenue to above Gayley and follow the signs. Double check signs to ensure you’re not parking in restricted spaces!

*If you have any concerns about path issues please call Jacque at 524-4715.*

**Annual membership in Berkeley Path Wanderers Association is \$5.00 per household due January 1st of each year. Donations are always welcome. Benefits include newsletter, and BPWA mailings. Mail form with check or money order, payable to: BPWA, Berkeley Partners for Parks 1442A Walnut St., #269, Berkeley, CA 94709**  
(BPWA is a member of Berkeley Partners for Parks, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.)

## BPWA Membership Form **Please print**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_