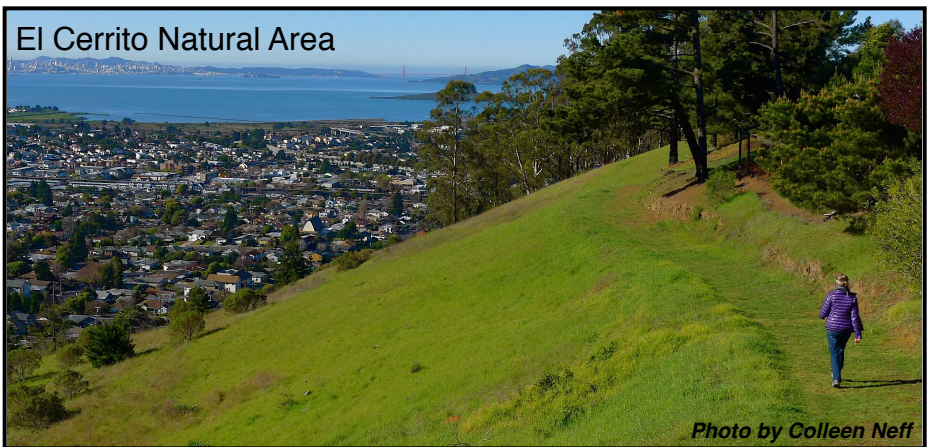


Berkeley's PATHS

Vol. 17 No. 3

Berkeley Path Wanderers Association

Fall 2014



Neighboring Path Groups Making Strides

By Colleen Neff

Have you ever taken a hike in Berkeley and ended up in Oakland, El Cerrito, or Kensington? When crossing a street can put you in another city, it's nice to know that our neighboring communities are making great progress in restoring and expanding their paths, using BPWA as their model. Here is a brief roundup of the ways that our sister groups are making it possible to extend your wandering without going far from home.

Oakland Urban Paths

Oakland Urban Paths(OUP) was started by Paul Rosenbloom, an urban and strategic planner and Oakland resident, in 2009. The first project was taking inventory of the more than 250 pathways, noting their location, condition, and accessibility. OUP volunteers now are working to make the paths safer and more attractive. Guided walks are offered on the second Saturday of most months. Local experts have led recent forays into West Oakland, Jingletown and the Estuary,

Rockridge, and the Golden Gate District. The Shop-and-Walk hike in December includes stops for holiday shopping at local retailers.

Sign up on their email list for notification of OUP events and activities. The *Rufus Walk Oakland!* map includes most of the paths and their names.

OaklandUrbanPaths.org
info@OaklandUrbanPaths.org
Facebook: Oakland Urban Paths

El Cerrito Trail Trekkers (ECTT)

The El Cerrito Trail Trekkers (ECTT) began in 2010 "to preserve, rebuild, and extend the public pathways, stairs, trails, greenways for pedestrian and bicycle use." The city's real gem is the Hillside Natural Area, some 85 acres of woods, creeks and grasslands with many trails. Potrero Avenue divides the preserve. The northern parcel is called Motorcycle Hill and features an exciting new, volunteer-built trail. The city is raising funds to buy a third parcel, the 8-acre Madera Open Space, that would link the two halves. The Trail Trekkers offer guided walks, including some by ECTT founder Dave Weinstein, a local historian and the architecture columnist for

(continued on page 3)



BPWA Walks

Walks last 2-3 hours, unless otherwise noted, and are free for members and nonmembers. Bring your own snacks and water. Questions about a walk? Write well before the date to: walks@berkeleypaths.org Weather cancellations will be posted the morning of the walk on berkeleypaths.org
No dogs, please, unless noted below.

Who Needs a Stairmaster?

Saturday, October 11 @ 10 a.m.

Leader: Janis Pearson

Start: Top of Berkeley Rose Garden

Transit: AC Transit Bus #65

Leave the gym behind, and join us for a two-hour aerobic workout. Expect lots of ups, downs, and turns on this fast-paced, five-mile fitness walk on the hilly streets and stairways near the Rose Garden. We will not wait for stragglers at the top of a climb, but each ascent will be followed by a descent or a flat section to let you catch your breath.

Community Gardens & Public Art Sunday, October 26 @ noon

Leader: Charlie Bowen

Start: Under BART tracks on Gilman St. near Curtis St.

Transit: AC bus #25

On this 4.5 mile flat, paved walk, we'll learn the history of our community gardens and how they run. We'll visit some near the Ohlone Greenway (and perhaps have a tour) and see interesting public art nearby..

Telegraph Ave: Then and Now Sunday, November 2 @ 10 a.m.

Leaders: Tom Dalzell & Ted Friedman

Start: Willard Park mosaic bench @ Derby St near Regent St.

Transit: AC buses #1, #51B

We'll cover more nostalgia than miles on this flat stroll with Tom, aka Mr. Quirky Berkeley; and Ted, a close observer of Telegraph Ave for 40 years. Meet at Willard Park — Ho Chi Minh Park in the 60's — and end in Sproul Plaza. We'll stop at murals and sites of historical and cultural interest, such as former restaurants, art cinemas, and bookstores, like Granma, opened by the Socialist Workers Party. We'll also pay homage to the Espresso Forum and other intellectual haunts. Well-behaved dogs on leashes are okay.

(Walks continued)

**Right-Brained Berkeley:
Art and Literature in the North Hills
Sunday, November 16; 10 a.m.**
Leader: Keith Skinner
Start: Bookish Bookstore, 1816 Euclid Ave
Transit: AC Buses F, #52, or #65

From Charles Keeler and Dorthea Lange to Ursula LeGuin, North Berkeley has been home to many famous creative people. Keith, an author himself, will take us to sites that were the residences and studios of — or served as the settings or inspiration for — twelve imaginative Berkeleyans. We'll end with a visit to Bookish, one of our few remaining independent bookstores. Count on three hours to complete this paved route that is just over four miles. Expect several steep climbs and frequent stops. Well-behaved dogs on leashes are okay.

**Holiday Open Studios Stroll
Saturday, December 6; 10:30 a.m.**
Leader: Lynn Deregowski
Start: NE corner of Page and 5th Streets
Transit: AC buses #25 or #52, walk ½ mile

What better way to discover local artists than the annual Berkeley Artisans Holiday Open Studios Tour! On this four-mile, flat paved route, we'll visit two sites that, together, house more than thirty craftspeople, among them painters, ceramicists, jewelry designers, woodworkers, and glass blowers. We also will enjoy the outdoor art in this creative part of Berkeley. Our first stop is the historic Sawtooth Building, where we'll spend 45 minutes exploring the studios. We'll finish at the Berkeley Potters Guild, near our starting point, where you can browse on your own. Although some artists accept credit cards, most prefer cash or checks. Get some exercise, find one-of-a-kind gifts, and support the artisans who call Berkeley home.

**Strawberry Canyon & Nearby Paths
Sunday, December 14; 11:30 a.m.**
Leaders: Zeke Gerwein & Jacob Lehmann Duke
Start: SW Corner of Euclid Ave & Eunice St
Transit: AC buses #65

Our favorite young leaders are back! This time they'll leave the pavement and hit the dirt in lovely Strawberry Canyon. Plan on 3 to 3½ hours to complete this 7½-mile route, starting with a mile-long steep ascent on hilly streets and stair paths, to Grizzly Peak Blvd. The rest of the route is more moderate, with some gentle downs, a few short ups on flatter trails and streets, and some stairways. At Lawrence Hall of Science, we'll begin our descent on three miles of fire trails. The boys have warned us that their pace will quicken on this segment. We'll return via campus.

Eagles on the Paths: Our Dedicated Partners

BPWA's success in opening the city's unfinished paths owes a huge debt to Eagle Scout candidates. Soon after BPWA was founded in 1998, the boys began helping to complete some of the fifty public pathways that still were impassable.

Over the years, dozens of Eagle Scout candidates have satisfied their local service requirement by planning



Scout Grant Black checks one of his new steps on Whitaker Path. — Photo by Steve Glaeser

and completing improvements on about 25 paths. Their accomplishments include installing steps, French drains, retaining walls, water diverters, bulletin boards, and benches. This year alone, six more Eagle candidates have approached us looking for projects.

The founders of BPWA did not envision this kind of hands-on work. Their original goals were to preserve the paths by increasing public awareness of them, creating the first path map, and lobbying the city to make much-needed repairs. The idea that citizen volunteers could actually transform steep, overgrown hillsides into safe and accessible runs of wood-tie stairs took more than a year to materialize — and some “matchmaking” by two of BPWA's first board members.

Susan Schwartz, who also was head of Friends of Five Creeks, knew that volunteer groups could apply for Berkeley Parks mini-grants to do community improvements. Paul Maheu, the leader of Berkeley Scout Troop 19, knew that Eagle Scout

candidates needed a public service project. With equipment from the Berkeley Tool Library, Scouts were soon building paths.

This win-win partnership added a new dimension to BPWA. Scouts from Troop 19 helped open Keeler, Ann Brower, Latham, and Atlas Paths. Paul Grunland, another early board member and an Eagle Scout himself, brought in boys from his own Troop 6. In 2002 Charlie Bowen took over leadership of the BPWA path building and greatly expanded its scope by recruiting adult volunteers and organizing adult work parties.

Other troops pitched in, among them Berkeley's Troops 24 and 6, and Scouts from Albany, El Cerrito, and even east of the hills. A Berkeley Girl Scout built Cedar Path. Troop 19 alone has had 34 Eagle Scout candidates complete separate projects on 12 paths.

“We average roughly 88 Scout-hours per project, which makes almost 2,900 hours,” Paul Maheu estimates. “Not so bad for a bunch of teenagers!”

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, candidates must satisfy rigorous requirements that include earning 21 merit badges and holding a leadership post in the troop. Their service project must have “lasting significance to the community” and requires meticulous planning, a management component, and an extensive written proposal.

Early projects were a learning experience for everyone. Weed cloth was quickly abandoned, for example, and other materials evolved. Scouts first used 4'- long steps, heavier than the 3' ones we install today; 5/8" rebar has replaced the original ¾" rebar, which was too hard to pound into clay and unyielding bedrock. Atlas Path was the most difficult challenge for the Scouts because of its long, steep slope and the bedrock just six inches below the surface. Three Eagle Scouts installed many of the steps on Atlas Path. A fourth added a bench.

“Everyone makes a few mistakes,” notes Paul Maheu, whose two sons completed path projects. “All the boys

tend to underestimate the time involved or the importance of making precise measurements and motivating others.”

The Scouts also have gotten lessons in neighborhood relations. “On at least two occasions, most notably Atlas Path,” Paul Maheu recalls, “suspicious neighbors called the Berkeley Police to report a bunch of adolescent boys ‘up to no good!’”

These days, Eagle Scout candidates are repairing and upgrading paths that their predecessors built years ago. Charlie, Steve Glaeser, co-leader of path building, and some veteran volunteers train and supervise the boys. Because the mini-grants ended, BPWA pays for their materials, thanks to the generous support of our members and revenues from our map and merchandise sales.

Casey Hopkins, from Troop 24, completed training with BPWA path builder Melissa Weaver last month. He will install about 15 steps at the south end of Keeler Path.

“I saw an opportunity to help Berkeley Path Wanderers,” Casey says. “I learned to calculate where the steps should go and how to place them so that they are even. It was harder than I expected.”

Eagle candidate Grant Black, from Troop 14, recently put ten new steps at the top of Whitaker Path and others to extend Cedar Path to La Loma Ave.

“The process was smooth and very rewarding,” he says. “I want to thank Berkeley Path Wanderers for sponsoring

Tax-deductible household memberships in the BPWA are \$5.00 and cover one calendar year. Benefits include a newsletter and other BPWA mailings and emails. If you can give more, please consider a donation. You can join or donate online at www.berkeleypaths.org or by sending this form and a check, payable to our fiscal parent BFPF (Berkeley Partners for Parks) to:

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



This metal gate, by the sculptor Mark Bullwinkle, adds whimsy to Path #9, one of the rustic wooden-step stairways volunteers are building in Kensington. Photo by Mark Altenberg

Neighboring Path Groups Making Strides

(continued from page 1)
the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Join the e-mail list to get monthly e-newsletters.

Website: ECTrailTrekking.wordpress.com

Email: ECTrailTrekking@gmail.com

Map and Trail list:
<http://ectrailtrekkers.org/map-and-trails/>
Facebook: El Cerrito Trail Trekkers

Ad Hoc Kensington Path Group

A few years ago, Kensington resident Bryce Nesbitt became interested in the ten pathways of his unincorporated village, which were in disrepair, unfinished, or blocked. No public agency was responsible for the paths, and Bryce lobbied for the Contra Costa County Park District to assume control. Although the legal status of the paths remains unresolved, Bryce inventoried the paths, which then were given numerical titles. Now an as-yet-unnamed group of path advocates has taken up the cause under the leadership of

Mark Altenberg, who lives on Path #9. The group is rallying public support for the paths and has installed signs on the passable ones. Mark is working with the Kensington Improvement Club to research and restore the historic names and publish a map. Volunteers now are finishing the installation of 165 wood steps on Path #9, which runs from Yale Avenue to Stanford Avenue. The next path slated for improvement is #7, the so-called Streetcar Path, which links Amherst Avenue to the #7 bus stop on Arlington Avenue.

For information: mark@altenberg.com
For a route with all the village paths, see our Kensington walk:
berkeleypaths.org/self-guided-walks/

Path Cleanup Season!

Fall is a great time to get together with your neighbors and pick a path to clean and weed. Or perhaps you know a group that wants to do a community service project. Ask us for help: info@berkeleypaths.org

BPWA Membership/Donation Form

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Telephone number (optional) _____

I am enclosing \$5 for membership

new

renewal

I am enclosing a donation of _____

I would like to volunteer for _____

Please make checks payable to our fiscal parent:
Berkeley Partners for Parks.

Berkeley Path Wanderers Association
1442-A Walnut St. #269
Berkeley, CA 94709
www.berkeleypaths.org

Board Members

LORI KOHLSTAEDT, president
ANGUS DUNSTON, On-line sales
KAY ENGLUND, walks
SANDY FRIEDLAND, map sales, newsletter editor
JIM HENDRY, treasurer
JOHN KENNY, archivist, webmaster, and path building
JANE LEVY, internal events
BETSY MUELLER, membership/correspondence
COLLEEN NEFF, walks, map maintenance
CHRIS STERBA, secretary, e-newsletter
ELSA TRANTER, external events

Berkeley Path Wanderers Association *Fall 2014*

Dedicated to the creation, preservation, and restoration of public paths, steps, and walkways in Berkeley for the use and enjoyment of all. The Berkeley Path Wanderers Association, an affiliate of Berkeley Partners for Parks, is a group of community volunteers who work to increase public awareness of Berkeley's pathways. Our activities include guided walks, mapping Berkeley's path network, building of paths on previously inaccessible city-own rights-of-way, and maintaining the rustic paths with wooden steps.



Photo by Colleen Neff

(l to r): Jane Levy, Mary Lynch, and Elsa Tranter touting BPWA's map and other merchandise before the Solano Stroll gets underway.

Solano Strollers Showed BPWA a Lot of Love!

This year's Solano Stroll was our best ever! We sold 150 maps, four posters, eight packets of note cards, 14 tee shirts, two hats, one tote bag and ten copies (including the sample!) of Charles Fleming's *Secret Stairs: East Bay*. We also got 74 new and renewing members and \$123 in donations. The proceeds will go directly into building and maintaining paths.

Best of all, however, was how many people stopped by to talk about the paths, share their path stories, and tell us how much they appreciated BPWA.

Thanks to all the volunteers who worked so hard to make the day such a resounding success. See you next year!