



Berkeley Partners For Parks

Fall 1996

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From the President

Since several adopt-a-park groups started meeting together in 1993 and since our incorporation as a nonprofit in 1994, Berkeley Partners for Parks (BPPF) has played an instrumental role in bringing additional funding and volunteer labor (what we call "sweat equity") to bear on improving Berkeley's parks and community gardens. Twenty-four projects received funding through the City's PERS disbursement of \$1.5 million dollars in 1994. Several of these projects have been completed, and more are in progress. The involvement of adopt-a-park groups working in partnership with the City of Berkeley has enabled more to be accomplished with limited public funds. The mini-grant program described in this issue is a good example of this.

Over the past six months, we have increased our fund-raising efforts to reach a broader segment of the community. The needs in Berkeley's parks are immense. Years of deferred maintenance have left many of the play areas in the city parks not just inadequate but dangerous. To address this need will take a cooperative effort involving the contributions of local businesses and concerned citizens as well as public funds. As a nonprofit, BPPF will be actively seeking grants and creative ways of fund-raising to meet the needs in our parks and open spaces, as well as continuing our grass-roots support of adopt-a-park volunteerism.

BPPF Board member Gail Keleman and I spent several joyful hours laboring over a proposal to the East Bay Community Foundation for a \$5,000 grant. The grant would allow us to hire a professional fund-raiser and help our group develop an at-large board. We have hopes that we will



Photograph by Mike O'Leary

Volunteers Working on Play Structure at Willard Park

succeed with our application. Our new newsletter represents another aspect of our outreach efforts.

Our Play Area Working Group, described within, has been meeting for several months to spearhead the process of restoring Berkeley's tot lots and other play areas. Former BPPF president Bill Lipsky and current Board members John Thelen-Steere, Gail Keleman, and I have begun developing a round-robin letter detailing strategies that have worked for fund-raising in the past. We need all your positive suggestions to make the matching fund authorized by the City Council work for Berkeley's kids. ■

William Clark, BPPF President

Mini-Grants Available for Park Projects

Two years ago, the Parks and Recreation Commission had the vision to approve the establishment of a Mini-Grant Fund proposed by Berkeley Partners for Parks. While making recommendations on how to allocate \$1.5 million dollars in PERS funds earmarked for parks, the Commission urged the City Council to set aside \$150,000 for a special fund to encourage community participation in improving the parks and greenspace in Berkeley. Members from BPPF, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and City staff serve on the committee that reviews grant applications.

Nearly \$63,000 has been allocated in the two rounds of mini-grants that have been awarded so far. Proposed projects have ranged from repair of existing park equipment to new plantings and new features. Grants have been given to twenty-eight projects, including the installation of mutt mitt dispensers for picking up after dogs in Cesar Chavez Park; identification markers for the Rose Garden; native tree planting in Parkside; native planting in People's Park; enhancement of the play water table, benches, and bulletin board in Totland; swing and table replacements at Codornices and Live Oak Parks; and landscaping of road barriers on Woolsey and Webster streets in South Berkeley.

The third round of mini-grants will be awarded early next year. A public meeting will be scheduled in January to inform interested groups about the grant application process. Grant applications will be due a month later, toward the end of February, and grant recipients will be selected in March. Lisa Caronna, the City landscape architect in charge of mini-grant administration, says, "No project is too small," and encourages everyone with a good idea to come forward. Grants of up to \$3,500 will be awarded. Berkeley Partners for Parks is available to serve as the nonprofit sponsor for newly formed groups. To be added to the mailing list for receiving notice of meetings and mini-grant application packets, contact Lisa Caronna, Landscape Architect, Parks & Waterfront Department, City of Berkeley (644-8526). ■

Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation

Berkeley Partners for Parks has benefited greatly from the wisdom and experience of Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation. Over the past years, Friends has channeled millions of dollars into Oakland's parks and recreation programs, including funding for major renovation of sixteen tot lots, an adopt-a-swimmer program for inner city youth, and grants to small projects. Members of the Board of Friends have given generously of their time and advice to BPPF president William Clark and vice president Mark Liolios. We thank them for inspiring us to be more effective in our work on behalf of Berkeley's parks. ■

*This newsletter is published by
Berkeley Partners for Parks (BPPF)*

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*BPPF is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation
founded in 1994 to support parks and open
spaces in Berkeley. For information, contact
Mark Liolios (549-0818), Gail Keleman
(525-3005), or Bill Lipsky (525-7532).*

BPPF Monthly Meetings

Wednesday, October 16, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 20, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 18, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 15, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. (annual meeting with election of Board members)

Meeting are held in the Green Room (employee lounge) at the City of Berkeley's Corporation Yard (entrance at the dead-end of Allston near Sacramento). ■



Stone Bridge at Live Oak Park

Drawing by William Clark, copyright 1994 FOLLO

Adopt-a-Park Group News

Friends of the Fountain and Walk

Marin Circle is the ever vital crossroads of north Berkeley. Three years ago, the Friends of the Fountain and Walk began a grass-roots effort to restore the neighborhood's architectural heritage. With the help of the City of Berkeley, EBMUD, PG&E, and the contributions of more than 1200 individual donors, an exact restoration of the historic fountain that once stood at Marin Circle was dedicated at a public ceremony on September 15. Marin Circle was closed to traffic while people gathered to celebrate water spouting again from the landmark fountain. The original fountain stood for fifty years at Marin Circle until it was knocked down in an accident in the late 1950s. Designed in 1910 by famous architect John Galen Howard, and featuring bear cub sculptures by Arthur Putnam, the fountain was Berkeley's first public work of art and the centerpiece of the Northbrae neighborhood. Contact Linda Perry, 525-1743.



Fountain Dedication (Photo by George Draper)

Codornices Park

Construction work on the PERS-funded Codornices Restoration Project began in late August and is expected to reach completion in November. A community work party to finish the planting is planned for Saturday, November 9. The new access trail from the park entrance to the tunnel entrance is still in the planning stage. Matching grants have been applied for to extend the tract into the Rose Garden. Construction is scheduled for next summer. Contact Bill Roberts, 841-1851.

Live Oak Park

The PERS project for Live Oak has been put on hold for another six months. Friends of Live Oak (FOLO) has replaced the wisteria-covered pergola and restored the redwood sculpture in the northwest corner of the park as well as the historic fireplace. Contact William Clark, 644-1912.

HopPer Commons

The HopPer Commons Association, adopt-a-park group for the Karl Linn Community Garden, is engaged in negotiations for expanding the community garden into the nearby North Berkeley BART property. There will be community meetings over the coming months to continue the planning process. Contact Anne Eastland, 528-3035.

Halcyon Commons

On July 21st, hundreds of South Berkeley residents and friends gathered to celebrate the transformation of a parking lot into a park. The celebration culminated almost four years of a grass-roots process initiated and conducted by Halcyon Neighborhood Association (HNA) in partnership with the City of Berkeley and local businesses Whole Foods Market and Alta Bates Medical Center. Neighborhood volunteers donated expertise in many areas, including the planning and design of the park and the construction of an arbor and community bulletin board. Last year, community volunteers worked alongside city crews to remove asphalt from a 28-car parking lot in the center of Halcyon Court. Then, in May and June, volunteers joined City gardeners to plant trees, bushes, and lawn. In addition, HNA received a \$1,500 grant toward the purchase of trees from California ReLeaf. As an adopt-a-park group, HNA is committed to helping with the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the park, and is raising funds to complete two custom-designed benches. Contact John Thelen-Steere, 849-1969.

Blackberry Creek

On Saturday, October 26, at 9 a.m., volunteer weed pullers are asked to assemble at the Tacoma entrance of Thousand Oaks School Park for a weed-pulling party. Work gloves and sturdy shoes are recommended. Depending on the number of volunteers, some graffiti removal may also be undertaken. Refreshment donations will be gratefully accepted. Contact G. J. Stillson MacDonnell, 525-6874.

New Groups

In the last couple of months, four new member groups have formed and joined Partners for Parks: Friends of San Pablo Park (contact Sara Rigler-Udo, 849-4175), Friends of John Hinkel Park (contact Tamara Hicks, 525-7021) Columbus Neighbors for Aquatic Park (contact Melissa Birch, 548-5294), and Friends of Shorebird Park (contact Phoebe Watts, 525-6614). All four groups are embarking on efforts to improve their parks' play areas. Additionally, Shorebird is raising funds for a 400 square foot straw bale building. Friends of San Pablo Park encourages residents of South Berkeley to attend a meeting that will allocate block grant funds on Wednesday, October 16, at 7:30 p.m., at 2939 Ellis St. (at Ashby).

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Willard Park

Friends of Willard Park will soon celebrate the opening of a new tot lot and disabled-access pathways. They have been working to improve the park for six years. They created a sandy pathway with roses and flowering plum trees at the Potters Wall. Then they built a handsome cobblestone entrance at the Derby/Hillegass corner. And now the new tot lot, three years in the making, provides a safe haven for children and their parents. Contact Bill Lipsky, 525-7532.

Aquatic Park

For over thirty years, members of Friends of Aquatic Park have worked to protect and improve the recreational and habitat resources of Berkeley's largest city park. Future projects coming to the park include relocation of a freeway on-ramp away from the park, habitat restoration funded by a state grant, and construction of an innovative "living wall" noise barrier that will shield park users from the traffic on I-80 through earthen terraces planted with native vegetation. Contact Mark Liolios, 549-0818. ■

Becky Temko Fund Launched

Berkeley resident Allan Temko has started a fund through Berkeley Partners for Parks to enhance and maintain Roosevelt Mini-Park in memory of his wife, Becky Temko, who served 15 years on the Berkeley Parks and Recreation Commission, including time as its Chair, and devoted incredible energy and resources to supporting Berkeley's parks. Tax-deductible donations can be made to BPFPP/Temko Fund. ■

Working Groups

Besides individual adopt-a-park groups, BPFPP sponsors working groups addressing various concerns.

Play Area Working Group

The Play Area Working Group has been meeting to establish which play areas qualify for matching funds set up by the City Council to meet needs in tot lots and play areas throughout the city. Lisa Caronna, the liaison from City staff to BPFPP, and members of the Parks and Recreation Commission have collaborated with the Working Group in setting guidelines for the play area projects, ranking the needs for repair, replacement, or retrofitting of play equipment. We are exploring a very flexible arrangement that would allow design-build, user-development projects. These possibilities are truly revolutionary because we could, if Council approves, get some play areas in place in months instead of years. Contact Natasha Beery, 848-1991.

Community Gardens & Parks Working Group

The Community Gardens and Parks Working Group was formed recently with the goal of exploring the possibility of joint projects and fund-raising between parks groups involved in BPFPP and community garden volunteers. We intend to focus on opportunities to develop sustainable public greenspace and urban agriculture (for example, the development of the un-utilized Santa Fe right-of-way owned by the City) to complement Berkeley's public park system. BPFPP member Berkeley Community Partnership is collaborating on this and other projects. Contact John Thelen-Steere, 849-1969. ■

Help support Berkeley's parks and open space! Give to Berkeley Partners for Parks. Please make your check payable to BPFPP/General Fund. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

Name(s) _____

Business: _____

Address _____

Title: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone: _____

- \$15 (student partner)
- \$15 (senior partner)
- \$25 (individual partner)
- \$35 (participating family)
- \$50 (contributing partner)
- \$100 (supporting partner)
- \$250 (business partner)
- \$500 (benefactor partner)
- \$1,000 + (patron partner)

Mail this form and your check to BPFPP, P.O. Box 13673, Berkeley, CA 94712.