

Berkeley Partners For Parks

Spring 1998

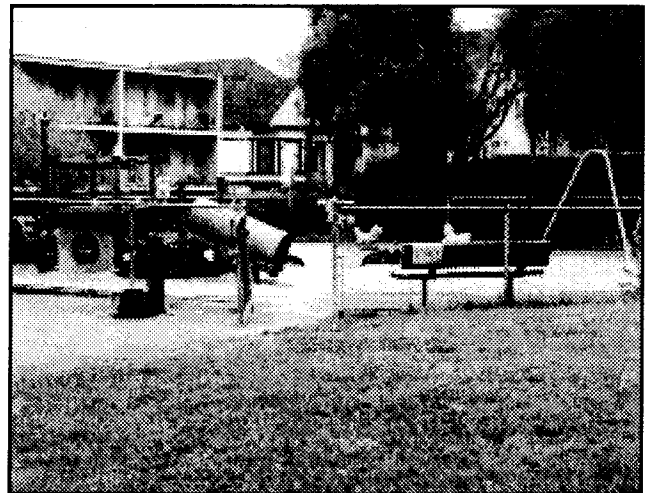
Vol. 3, No. 1

Ohlone Tot Lot East: Renovation Needed

BFPF Raising Matching Funds to Restore Ohlone Tot Lot East

The aging and deteriorated play area located at Hearst and Bonita (across the street from the North Berkeley Senior Center parking area) contains an extremely worn and rotting wooden play structure, broken spring animals, and tires buried in the sand. This centrally located tot lot is in desperate need of renovation and has been selected by the Matching Fund Joint Ad Hoc Committee as the next play area to receive matching funds. Berkeley Partners for Parks is currently in the process of raising \$25,000 for the Ohlone East renovation, which will be matched by the City, to fully fund this approximately \$50,000 project. BFPF will work with the City to involve neighbors in the design process for the tot lot, starting with a community meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 30, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the North Berkeley Senior Center at MLK and Hearst.

As reported in our previous newsletter, the City Council, as part of an effort to meet the need to bring all of Berkeley's play areas into compliance with current safety and accessibility standards, set aside \$125,000 in matching funds. Berkeley Partners for Parks (BFPF) has pledged to raise the matching \$125,000. The Matching Fund Joint Ad Hoc Committee, composed of representatives from the Parks and Recreation Commission, BFPF, and City Staff, is responsible for selecting the play areas which will receive matching funds. In addition to the matching funds projects, the Parks Department is setting aside part of its budget annually for play area renovations. Finally, where projects are



Photograph by Brad Ricards

Aging Tot Lot at Ohlone Park Needs Renovation

eligible, the Parks Department and BFPF are working together to support community applications for grants, such as the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) received for renovations at San Pablo Park, Aquatic Park, and 63rd Street Mini-Park (and, we hope, for Prince Street Mini-Park). Over the next few years, with your support, we can ensure that all of Berkeley's play areas are safe and stimulating for our community's children.

First Matching Fund Project Under Way at Thousand Oaks

With BFPF's sponsorship, the Thousand Oaks Parks Society successfully raised over \$25,000 to renovate the tot lot at Thousand Oaks Park, which was matched by the City of Berkeley, with a major contribution from the Berkeley Unified School District. BFPF is in the process of finalizing a contract with Community Playgrounds of Novato to finish the construction of the new tot lot by the middle of July.

About Berkeley Partners for Parks

Berkeley Partners for Parks (BPPF) is a citywide non-profit devoted to supporting and developing parks, community gardens, and open spaces in Berkeley through encouraging citizen involvement and support. Since its incorporation as a nonprofit in 1994, BPPF has played an instrumental role in bringing additional funding and thousands of hours of volunteer labor ("sweat equity") to bear on improving Berkeley's parks, community gardens, and public landscaping. The participation of adopt-a-park groups working in partnership with the City and local businesses has led to improvements in dozens of parks and community gardens throughout the City of Berkeley. ■

Check Out BPPF's New Website

BPPF recently launched a website at www.bppf.org. The site includes information about many of our adopt-a-park groups, volunteer opportunities, and our initiative to improve play area safety. Past editions of our newsletter can be downloaded, and a map of Berkeley's parks will help you take advantage of parks you may not even have been aware existed. This is only the beginning of what we believe will prove a valuable resource for the community. Please check out the website. If you have additions or suggestions, you can contact the webmaster, Zasa Swanson, by e-mail at webmaster@bppf.org. We look forward to your input. Many thanks to Zasa and Stephen Swanson of Eminent Software (zasaswanson@eminentsoftware.com), a Berkeley-based software developer; Zasa and Stephen volunteered countless hours constructing the site and will continue to maintain it. They also generously funded our domain name. Very special thanks as well to WinterLAN (noelw@winterlan.com), a local Internet provider, which is hosting BPPF's Internet services free of charge. ■

Free Trees Available from the City

The City of Berkeley is embarking on an ambitious community tree-planting program. You can get a *free tree* to plant in the City's right-of-way in your neighborhood. For more information and to request an application, please call the City of Berkeley's Forestry Department at 644-6567. Thanks to a grant the City received, the tree-planting program will also allow for new trees in our parks, downtown, and along major streets throughout the City. ■

Kudos to Director Lisa Caronna

After a year as acting director of the Department of Parks and Waterfront, Lisa Caronna's new position as permanent director was recently approved by the City Council. Lisa brings her years of experience as a landscape architect and her excellent skills in working with the community to the permanent position. Congratulations, Lisa! ■

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

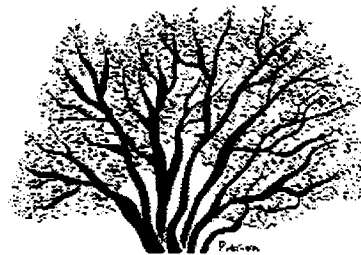
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*BPPF is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation
(I.D. # 94-3228356) founded in 1994 to
support parks and open spaces in Berkeley. For
more information, contact Mark Liolios
(549-0818), Zasa Swanson (649-9874), or
John Caner (849-8405).*

The President's Corner

Our efforts to improve Berkeley's parks benefited greatly in 1997 from the strong leadership of outgoing Board members Natasha Beery, Claudia Kawczynska, and Sarah Butler. A warm welcome to newly elected first-time Board members Christine Swett (a driving force behind the tot lot at Thousand Oaks), John Caner (also a Trustee of Friends of Willard Park), and Zasa Swanson (a leader in community efforts to renovate the tot lot at San Pablo Park). Rounding out our 1998 Board of Directors are continuing Board members Mark Liolios and Immediate Past President Nancy Carleton. At our Annual Meeting in January we also voted to create a new At-Large Board to advise us on specific issues. Gail Keleman, Sarah Butler, Jack Hoyt, and John Thelen Steere were elected. We also elected officers: John Caner (Secretary); Zasa Swanson (Chair of the Board), and Mark Liolios (President). Our very deep appreciation goes to Scott Boyer, our hardworking Treasurer.



Our commitment to restoring play areas for children across the City is bearing real fruit. In addition to the Matching Fund projects we are sponsoring, with our support, Prince Street Mini-Park should receive \$50,000 in federal funds. Our new website provides the opportunity to keep volunteers informed, and our booth at Earth Day will publicize Berkeley's ambitious community tree-planting program. With Lisa Caronna as the new permanent director for the Department of Parks and Waterfront, we forecast a renaissance in Berkeley's parks and open spaces. Help us make this vision a reality! ■

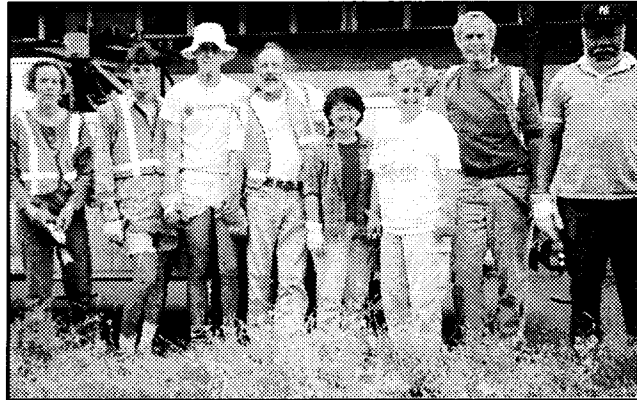
Mark Liolios, BPPF President

Adopt-a-Park Group News

Adopt-a-park groups bring together concerned neighbors and park users who want to take responsibility for improving specific parks, community gardens, or public landscaping. Working in partnership with City staff when appropriate, citizen volunteers participate in a wide range of activities, from weeding, cleaning, and helping with ongoing maintenance to generating community participation in planning and implementing new park projects. This column reports on the activities of some of the adopt-a-park groups that make up Berkeley Partners for Parks.

The University Avenue Gardeners bravely coped with heavy winter rains as they weeded the many blocks of medians on University Avenue weekend after weekend in preparation for seeding a bright variety of native wildflowers to complement the California poppies already established. Now they are back to their usual schedule of weeding twice monthly (first Saturdays and third Sundays, from 9 to 11 a.m.). Bring gloves and favorite weeding tools, or the City will provide. Call 849-2103 for more information.

Pillars of Our Community is continuing to raise funds to restore the pillars at Ashby and College. They are excited to announce that they are now within \$1,500 of their goal of \$3,000 and hope to accomplish the restoration project this summer. Please make checks payable to BPPF/Pillars of Our Community and mail to Doris Nassiry, 2746 Webster Street, Berkeley, CA 94705. Your contributions are tax-deductible. Contact 849-4356.



University Avenue Gardeners (Photo copyright Allen Stross)

Friends of San Pablo Park look forward to the installation of the new tot lot. Volunteers are needed in full force to help with the installation, which is scheduled for the weekends of May 9-10 and May 16-17. If physical labor isn't your strong suit, volunteers are also needed to help with child care and food. Contact 649-9874 for details on how you can help.

Friends of 61st Street Mini-Park announce that their play area project is also set to move forward over the next few months. This exciting project will help rejuvenate the entire neighborhood. Call 652-7869 to find out how to get involved.

Friends of the Berkeley Rose Garden (FOBRG) have some good news to announce! With the combined efforts of the City's Parks Department, FOBRG volunteers, the generous donations of several hundred neighbors, and a year's hard work by two gifted City gardeners, Art Boado and Stu Swanson, the Rose Garden is looking better than it has in years. Now is the time to come by and enjoy the spring display of roses, if the deer leave anything to bloom following their regular munchings! Thankfully, construction begins in April on the long-anticipated fence to keep deer out of the rose terraces. Also under way is an exciting program to replace worn benches at the garden; call Cliff Orloff at 527-8898 if you are interested in donating one. Some are already in place at the rebuilt overlook. Later this spring, volunteers will plant the hillside below the entry and the built-in planters, thanks to the Parks Department's mini-grant program. Call 525-3005 if you want to help.

Continued on page 4

Next Round of Mini-Grants Scheduled

Over the last several years, the City has allocated over \$120,000 in three rounds of mini-grants for community-sponsored improvements in Berkeley's parks and open spaces. Grants have been given to several dozen projects throughout the City. Among the projects receiving funds in the last round were picnic tables, shrubbery, and trash cans at Aquatic Park; Rose Garden entrance plantings; see-saw replacement and fireplace restoration at Codornices Park; renovation and landscaping of an Elmwood circle diverter; improvements near the tennis courts at King School; a new sign and fence at Live Oak Park; landscaping improvements at Malcolm X School; planter boxes on Milvia Slow Street; and a new bench and planters at the Peralta Community Garden. The next round of mini-grants will be awarded this summer. A public meeting will be held on Thursday, May 14, at the Corporation Yard meeting room (1326 Allston) to inform interested groups about the grant application process. Applications will be due a month later, and recipients will then be selected by the Parks and Recreation Commission. 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 notices of meetings and mini-grant application packets, contact Brad Ricards, Landscape Architect, Parks & Waterfront Department (665-3455). Mini-grants provide the raw resources to fund the positive changes you envision for your local park, streetscape, or community garden. Please apply! ■

Continued from page 3

At **Halcyon Commons** mini-park, spring has blossomed forth with flowering trees, bushes, and irises in full bloom. Heavy weeding is planned by the **Friends of Halcyon Commons** in April and May, and neighborhood children will plant the community herb and flower garden later in the spring. Call 644-0172.

Friends of César Chávez Park continue to provide Mutt Mitts at the park and encourage a culture of responsible dog ownership. They are awaiting the outcome of the compromise proposal to include a seventeen-acre off-leash dog area at the park (this proposal will come before the City Council early in June, once the Environmental Impact Report negative declaration is reviewed). The fourth edition of *The Berkeley Bark*, which has expanded to a 20-page larger format, just came out, once again to rave reviews. This highly acclaimed paper now offers subscriptions to dog enthusiasts everywhere. For more information and to receive a sample copy, contact 704-0827.

Friends of Aquatic Park report that the Berkeley City Council has approved a contract with the engineering firm T. Y. Lin International to prepare detailed design documents for the federally funded I-80 bicycle/pedestrian overcrossing. The soaring bridge, based on design guidelines that are the result of lengthy community discussion, will link the northern end of Aquatic Park, near the foot of Addison Street, with the Bay Trail, the Marina, and the Eastshore State Park that is being purchased and developed along Berkeley's shoreline. Additional community involvement will be essential to the success of the project. For more information, contact 549-0818.

The **HopPer Commons Association** wishes to announce an upcoming Mural Painting Workshop at Peralta Community Garden by Alan Leon on April 19 and 26, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. During the spring there will be an installation of a mosaic, sculptural bench, colored slate and colored tile mural. The gardens will be open on Earth Day, April 25. Bonsai Tree Instruction will take place at Karl Linn Community Garden on May 30. Contact 528-3035 for more information.

Friends of Dorothy Bolte Park received a mini-grant for additional play equipment and landscaping. Contact 527-2556 to help carry out the project.

Berkeley Path Wanderers Association (BPWA), "dedicated to the restoration and preservation of the public paths, steps and walkways in Berkeley, for the use and enjoyment of all its citizens," continues to attract new members. Contact 525-7990 for more information.

Following the successful installation of the new tot lot, the **Friends of Willard Park** have made a commitment to improve the clubhouse for children over six. The project will also include improvements around the clubhouse. In addition their plans cover improvements to the four corners of the park, as funded by a recent mini-grant. To help, contact 525-7532.

The **Thousand Oaks Parks Society**, as reported on page 1, looks forward to seeing tots back in the park by early summer, having a terrific time on the new climbing structure, tot swings, and safety reeter-totter (no dangerous bumping), and creating castles in the fresh sand. Watch BPPF's website for more information about construction time lines and the Grand Opening Celebration, or leave a message at 526-5888. ■

Help support Berkeley's parks, community gardens, and open space! Please give to Berkeley Partners for Parks, a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Make your check payable to BPPF. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

Name(s): _____

Business: _____

Address: _____

Title: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

- \$1-15 (low-income) \$50 (contributing partner) \$500 (benefactor partner)
- \$25 (individual partner) \$100 (supporting partner) \$1000 + (patron partner)
- \$35 (participating family) \$250 (business partner) Other: \$ _____

Contributors of \$50 or more are entitled to receive a complimentary T-shirt (natural color with BPPF's logo in forest green); if you are giving \$50 or more, please indicate your preferred T-shirt size: Large Extra Large

Please mail this form and your check to BPPF, P.O. Box 13673, Berkeley, CA 94712.