

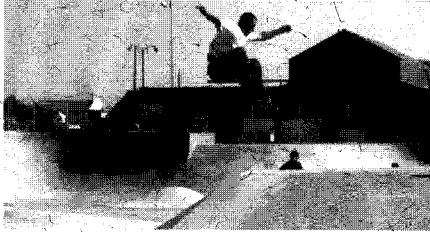
# Berkeley Partners For Parks



*Improving Berkeley's parks, community gardens, paths, and open space.*

Winter 2002/03 Vol. 6, No. 1

## *Berkeley Skate Park Opens BPFPP Works to Expand Informal Recreation for Youth*



On September 15 the ribbon was cut and dozens of kids streamed into the new Berkeley Skate Park. It's been busy ever since, and it already has an excellent reputation among skaters. The Berkeley Skate Park didn't come easily, and it shows the commitment of city government and the people of Berkeley to serve the recreational needs of our youth.

Back in 1996, skate mom Kate Obenour was mad that her elementary-school age son Wyatt Miller was being chased off school grounds by police and yelled at by merchants for skateboarding. Kate explains, "there was no place for a kid to be a kid, you can't lock 'em up until he's 21". Kate wanted to do something positive so she enlisted the support of the Mayor and council members. Kate, her son and local skateboarders organized street demos at How Berkeley Can You Be and other events, where they showed off the sport on portable ramps. Behind the scenes, they pursued the matter through Berkeley's commissions and worked with the Association of Sports Field Users, who were pursuing their own dream of new sports fields in Berkeley. Once the project was a go, the skaters chose the designer Mike McIntyre, who did four design workshops with local skaters at the North Berkeley Senior Center. By careful design the skate park has features for "street" and "vert" skaters. Almost seven years after Wyatt was chased for skateboarding by police, Berkeley has one of the best skate parks around. Kate's final comment—"Skateboarding is not a crime."

BPFPP has taken a leading role in advocating for and contributing sweat equity to new playgrounds for our younger children. We also realize the need for increased informal recreational opportunities for our older youth (ages 8-18). Recreation trends change and our parks don't always keep up. The City also recognizes this need, and the new Berkeley Skate Park is a huge step in this direction.

We should also look at opportunities for better youth recreation facilities in our neighborhood parks. BPFPP's Board of Directors has offered to put \$5,000 toward a small beginner skate park at Cedar/Rose park if the City matches it with a \$3,500 mini-grant. Neighbors have been generally supportive of the idea. The proposal will be brought back to the Parks & Recreation Commission within the next six months, after further study.

Rock climbing/bouldering is another sport that is just now being taken into parks. BPFPP applied for and received Community Development Block Grant money for a playground climbing wall for San Pablo Park, which will be installed sometime in 2003. The wall is low enough to be safe, but still challenging for kids 6-14. If the concept works well at San Pablo, it could be used elsewhere. There are even "playground" climbing sculptures that are challenging for teens and adults.

BMX bicycling is another newer sport with few places for kids to go in the dense inner East Bay. There is currently an informal bmx dirt jump area near the waterfront that will be removed with the creation of the Eastshore State Park. BPFPP President Stephen Swanson is working to find BMXers a new place to practice their sport.

## *Santa Fe Right of Way Developments*

*Greenway Dreams Slowly Coming True*

In April 2002 the Berkeley City Council voted to fund a pedestrian/bike pathway on the Santa Fe Right of Way (SFRW) from Strawberry Creek Park to Delaware St. City staff is also looking for funds to complete the pathway to Lincoln Street and the Ohlone Greenway. This will include full landscaping and a pedestrian-activated crossing at University Ave. Thanks to everyone who made this happen, including many park and bike activists, city staff, Berkeley Montessori School (which is allowing the SFRW trail to go through their property, the old Santa Fe Bar and Grill site), and the Berkeley City Council.

The planning process will be run by an outside consultant, starting in six months to a year from now. The consultant's charge will be to plan a pedestrian/bike greenway. Neighborhood and park activists who have compatible open space goals for the Santa Fe Right of Way adjacent to the pathway should start planning and coalescing now.

At the same time, plans are coming forth for green use of the southern parts of the Santa Fe Right of Way. BOSS Urban Gardens Institute has city council approval for a nonprofit organic nursery, food production garden, and outdoor classroom on the two southern-most blocks of the SFRW at Sacramento and Oregon. The focus is on job training/horticultural therapy for individuals in transition from homelessness. There will also be some neighborhood vegetable beds. The project is fully-funded through private grants and only requires zoning approval before it becomes a reality.

SFRW neighbors are proposing a community orchard on two blocks of the ROW from Carleton to Ward. This proposal is in its beginning stage and still needs funding

*(See Santa Fe-Continued on page 4)*

## Adopt-a-Park News

### Berkeley Garden Club Keeps Ecology Garden Looking Good at Dreamland by Zasa Swanson



Mildred Bennett & Delcye Bailey of the Berkeley Garden Club Trimming at the Ecology Garden

The butterfly hummingbird attracting native Ecology Garden at Aquatic Park's Dreamland for Kids has grown in the last year to be quite spectacular. Thanks goes to the Berkeley Garden Club Civic Beautification Committee for maintaining and cataloging the plants in the Ecology Garden. For information about the Berkeley Garden Club, contact Delcye Bailey at 547-4165.

To add a kid-pleasing feature to the garden, community members decided to add an interactive water feature. The feature has been designed gratis by the Berkeley firm MIG and will feature a child-activated

trickling stream and water-tolerant plants. Thanks to MIG for the community spirit.

For more information about Dreamland for Kids, email Zasa Swanson at [zasaswanson@eminentsoftware.com](mailto:zasaswanson@eminentsoftware.com) or call 649-9874.

### Aquatic Park Habitat Restoration by Mark Liolios

Aquatic Park's habitat restoration project has grown to great size and beauty in its second year. Native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers are thriving on the gentle banks between the main lagoon and the middle pond, providing both food and cover for a range of birds and other animals.

Yellow bush lupine and monkeyflower have successfully produced new generations and the flat forms of coyote brush and ceanothus have grown into a shimmering ground cover.

Underway now by Friends of Aquatic Park is installation of landscaping for the park's signature traffic circle at the southern entryway. New vegetation has already been purchased and will be planted in the coming season. Also, this year's mix of wildflower seeds will be scattered once the rains have arrived - by spring the south loop pathway will be ablaze in color. If you would like to assist with the fall's plantings, or would like a guided tour of the landscaping, contact Mark Liolios at 549-0818 or [markl@lmi.net](mailto:markl@lmi.net).

### New Play Area Planned for People's Park by Dana Merryday

We are a group of interested community members who are working towards improving the children's play area at People's Park in Berkeley. There is currently a small sanded play area with a small slide and two swings. Such a historic park that has played such a pivotal role in Berkeley's cultural fabric deserves a more welcoming and attractive area for our younger citizens.

A community-developed plan for People's Park has identified the play area as a priority for improvement. The People's Park Advisory Board has been discussing the possibilities of improving and expanding the children's play area. Beginning last spring, surveys were developed and are available at the People's Park recreation office. A community meeting was

held in the Park last June. We are actively seeking community input to help guide this process.

This is a call for all persons who have ideas, visions, and interest to come and share those with us and help develop real input from the community so that our improved children's area reflects the needs and desires of our community and it's children.

If you have anything to add to this process, ideas to share, or are interested in helping to make this vision a realization please contact Dana Merryday at (510) 464-4615 or [dana\\_merryday@yahoo.com](mailto:dana_merryday@yahoo.com).

Current and future generations of Berkeley's children thank you! Everybody gets a blister! Let a thousand parks bloom! Make it happen!

### Friends of San Pablo Park by Stephen Swanson

Berkeley Partners for Parks applied for and received a Community Development Block Grant to install a climbing wall in San Pablo Park's school-age play area. The application was supported by the community and teen-club kids at the recreation center. Look for installation sometime in 2003.

Friends of San Pablo Park and the San Pablo Neighborhood Council have been organizing to obtain funds for a rebuilt recreation center that will include a gym. Parks, Rec. & Waterfront has applied for a large federal grant and we will hopefully know soon if we will be able to go ahead.

We are also advocating for an informal rec. leader to provide balls and create play opportunities and structure for the many children who come to the park on their own.

For more information, email Stephen Swanson at [sswanson@eminentsoftware.com](mailto:sswanson@eminentsoftware.com) or call 649-9874.

Zasa Swanson is in the process of developing a reading program for children in San Pablo Park. Contact her at 649-9874, [zasaswanson@eminentsoftware.com](mailto:zasaswanson@eminentsoftware.com).

(Continued on page 3)

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[mail@bppf.org](mailto:mail@bppf.org) with subject  
"subscribe"

Meetings are held every third Monday  
of the Month, 7:30PM to 9:00PM, Cor-  
poration Yard, 1326 Allston Way.

Berkeley Partners for Parks (BPPF) is a non-  
profit 501 (c)3 corporation founded in 1994.

We are dedicated to the improvement of parks,  
community gardens, paths, and open space in  
Berkeley.

*(Adopt-a-Park News—Continued from page 2)*

**Berkeley Rose Garden's New Sign**

by Gail Keleman

Several years ago Friends of the Berkeley



Rose Garden (FOBRG) began the process of replacing the dilapidated sign at the entry to the Rose Garden on Euclid Avenue. To help us along, FOBRG was awarded a mini-grant in 1998 for the sign re-

placement and council member Betty Olds provided much encouragement and support.

Helene Vilett, a local architect, Rose Garden neighbor and FOBRG volunteer developed a series of design solutions compatible with the recent changes to the Garden entrance and the surrounding landscape. Jeff Hunt, a set designer and another volunteer, further refined the design concept and built a model of and provided working drawings for the trellis and support structure. Since the existing sign was landmarked, there began a lengthy process to obtain design approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Jeff worked tirelessly with LPC's special subcommittee on the Rose Garden on design details and with City engineers on the structure of the trellis.

Thanks are due to local graphic designers and design/build contractors Bill Moore & Associates who donated the sign to the City of Berkeley. We are deeply grateful

for this extraordinarily generous donation and for the work of Alastair Cumming, who guided the sign's design, supervised its manufacture and designed and engineered its installation. The trellis was built and installed by deSmidt Builders of Oakland, using salvaged Western red cedar.

Finally, there's a beautiful new sign that properly locates and announces our 65-year-old regional treasure. A celebration and dedication was held October 15 and now FOBRG's next task is to put in landscaping in the area underneath the sign and a couple of climbing roses tall enough to escape our hungry urban deer.

**Berkeley Path Wanderers News**

Due to sell-out popularity, BPWA has just completed a second printing of its enormously popular map of Berkeley's charming and historic path system. The detailed map features over 136 passable and impassable paths, a comprehensive index of their names and Berkeley City-assigned numbers, a brief path history, and is printed on durable, water-resistant and stain resistant paper. The BPWA Map made Top Ten in the East Bay Express "East Bay Best-Sellers" List for July.

Upcoming walks include the Albany Bulb on December 7, 10AM, meeting at the end of Buchanan St.

For more information, contact Jacque Ensign at 510-524-4715, or visit [www.berkeleypaths.org](http://www.berkeleypaths.org).

**How Can We Do it? Your BFPF Membership!**

**BFPFs Accomplishments**

1. Successfully pushed for formation of a parks department separate from public works.
2. Fiscal sponsor and insurance coverage for dozens of park, garden, creek and pathway improvements, and Young Artists Workspace.
3. Originated and co-Sponsor popular parks "Mini-Grant" program
4. Partnered with parks staff to successfully bring the need for playground renovation to the city council's attention.
5. Spearheaded creation of Dreamland for Kids playground.
6. Leading the effort to create a bike/pedestrian greenway and park land along the Santa Fe Right of Way.

**Cost to Berkeley Taxpayers for BFPFs Operating Expenses: \$0**

*(Continued on page 4)*

**I want to support Berkeley's Parks and Open Space.**

BFPF relies on your membership to operate! We receive no City of Berkeley funds for operating expenses. Has your membership to BFPF expired? Check your mailing label.

Make your checks out to BFPF. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1-25 (low income)          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 (contributing membership) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 (benefactor membership) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 (individual membership) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 (supporting membership)  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 (patron membership)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 (family membership)     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 (business membership)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: \$ _____               |

Contributors of \$50 or more are entitled to receive a BFPF tote bag (natural color with BFPF's logo in forest green)

**Thank you for your support!!!!**

(Adopt-a-Park News—Continued from page 3)

### Friends of Strawberry Creek

by Janet Byron

In recent months, Friends of Strawberry Creek has focused on developing an organizational structure, including bylaws, to help us better plan, prioritize and make decisions about important issues facing the creek. We continue to monitor the broken culvert at Strawberry Creek Lodge and North Valley Street, and to work with Ecocity Builders, the Public Works Department and others on finding a creative solution to this complex problem. We applied for and received conditional support from the Berkeley mini-grant program for a small grant to rebuild the deteriorated fence at the Strawberry Creek overlook on Allston Way, pending a survey of property lines. For more information, contact Janet Byron at [info@strawberrycreek.org](mailto:info@strawberrycreek.org) or 848-4008.

**Strawberry Creek Lodge Restoration Project Update:** This year, work began in June under the leadership of Chris Kröll. We have cleared Algerian ivy, Himalayan blackberry, and Siberian elm from a large section of the bank west of Jane's site, including with the assistance of volunteers from the California Native Plant Society. We are now in the process of putting down erosion-control blankets to hold the bank during the winter and prevent erosion. Kröll has a final plant list thanks to Jane Kelly, Lisa Viani-Owens and the Urban Creeks Council. We are just beginning to gather our plants together and will be planting beginning later this month or at the beginning of December. If you are interested in coming to a work party, contact Chris Kröll at [quercus40@hotmail.com](mailto:quercus40@hotmail.com) or 528-2277.

### Ohlone Greenway Commons

By Karl Linn

Three new public art installations and a native plant restoration are being viewed daily along the Ohlone Greenway. The exhibit uses art installations, interpretive signs, and a coastal prairie habitat project to tell the many-layered stories of the place and its inhabitants in a lively and engaging manner.

Inspired by the success in building the Peralta, Northside, and Karl Linn community gardens, a grassroots team of neighbors and volunteer professionals began a collaborative effort to transform the Westbrae section of the Ohlone

Greenway. The narrow pedestrian and bicycle thoroughfare is gradually becoming a linear neighborhood commons by providing opportunities for neighbors and visitors to socialize around the art installations and outdoor seating areas.

The first installation, the Peralta Gateway, a columnar adobe-like structure with curved roof made of red clay tiles, commemorates and displays information about the family of Luis Peralta, holder of the land grant for most of Berkeley and Oakland during the Californiano-Hispanic period. The adobe hacienda of one of Peralta's four sons, Domingo Peralta, was the first permanent building in Berkeley, built on what is now nearby Albina Street. Colorful, hand-painted tiles depicting Californiano motifs were made by children at the Youth Artists' Workspace, under the direction of Jennifer Burke, and embedded in a bench attached to the structure.



Further down the Greenway at the Northside Street cul-de-sac, under the shade of ornamental pear trees, is the second installation,

which commemorates the agricultural period. Four steel silhouettes of cows with distinctive personalities, created by artist Amy Blackstone, graze in the background of the exhibit while visitors rest on resilient old metal tractor seats.

At the Nielsen Street cul-de-sac, just south of Gilman Street, a 72-foot-long mural has been painted on cement board mounted on the concrete wall that supports the BART rails. The mural, painted by artist Alan Leon in collaboration with other local artists, including Dan Fohntes, depicts the evolution of transportation systems along the greenway and the migrations of people that they brought to the Westbrae neighborhood. Titled "From Elk Tracks to BART Tracks," the mural, a timeline that portrays the pre-settlement period and extends through the native-American, Spanish, Gold Rush, Victorian, street car-suburban, pre- and post-World War II periods, and the contemporary era with BART, has received enthusiastic responses from passers-by. For more information contact Karl Linn, (510) 841-3757, [karl@linn.net](mailto:karl@linn.net).

## City Park Projects

Watch for community meeting announcements (and BPFP's website - [www.bpfp.org](http://www.bpfp.org)) as the public input process gets near to beginning for renovating the CCA-treated wood play structures at Cedar Rose Park, Live Oak Park, King School Park and Shorebird Park.

Virginia-McGee Tot Land Renovations will soon get underway—the sand box area will be upgraded for safety and accessibility.

The Shorebird Park Straw Bale Building is under construction and nearing completion.

Bids will be advertised by the New Year for playground and park entrance accessibility renovations at Codornices Park and new playground equipment at the Ohlone Park School-Age Play Area. Safety modifications to the existing hill slide at Dorothy Bolte Park are part of this contract.

Bids will be advertised within the month for the removal of Kikuyu-grass infested soil along University Ave., between 6th street and MLK Jr. Way. This is Phase 1 of two phases for renovating the landscaping and irrigation in the medians. Phase 2 will begin in the spring.

Round 7 Mini-grants are scheduled to be approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission at their Nov. 25 meeting.

For more information, contact City Landscape Architect Brad Ricards at [bricards@ci.berkeley.ca.us](mailto:bricards@ci.berkeley.ca.us), 981-6437.

## Parks Grant Writer Needed

Berkeley Partners for Parks (BPFP) is still in search of a volunteer Grant Writer. We are looking for someone with excellent oral and written communication skills. Experience in grant writing is not required.

(Santa Fe—Continued from page 1) and approval. Another idea that has come up but is not currently being pursued for the southern blocks of the ROW is an off-leash dog area. To keep informed of SFRW developments, get on our email list by sending an email to [mail@bpfp.org](mailto:mail@bpfp.org), and even better, join BPFP.