

Berkeley's PATHS

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Berkeley Path Wanderers Association

Summer 2013

In Search of Quirky Berkeley – Tom Dalzell

To whatever extent Berkeley ever earned its clichéd reputation as “Berkeley” – if it ever did – it remains a place like no other.



Photo by Tom Dalzell

Karl Wanaselja and Cate Leger's wall of Volvo hatch doors are part of The Dwight building at Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and McGee Ave.

We live in a beautiful spot. We have a university that provides constant innovation, thought, creativity and novelty. We benefit from the rejuvenating socio-economic friction between the flats and the hills and our multiculturalism. We value individualism and we manifest our individualism in many ways, including architecture, design, and placed-for-public-view art and artifacts.

Late in 2012, I set out to walk every block of every street, path, and alley of Berkeley, cataloging and photographing the quirky material culture that serves as a physical and visible manifestation of our inward quirkiness. Now I want to show those who like to wander Berkeley as I do some of what I've found.

On a walk through Berkeley's south side in late August, we will see some major examples of Quirky Berkeley, including:

- ▶ Eccentric architecture, such as the Tsui fish house on Matthews Street or the work of Karl Wanaselja and Cate Leger on M.L. King Jr. Way and McGee Avenue.

- ▶ Whimsical collections presented to the street, such as Eni Green's dachshund sculptures on Harper Street, and front-yards-as-galleries at artists' homes such as Stan Huncilman's on Fifth Street.
- ▶ Only-in-Berkeley quirkiness that defies categorization, such as the Wall of Democracy on Pardee Street.

As we walk from major quirky site to major quirky site, we'll also do what I do when I walk by myself: look for smaller manifestations of for-public-view quirkiness, such as a unique mailbox, happy clam curtains, intriguing color choices, little-seen murals or small lawn sculptures.

And depending on our pace and progress, there are several more wonderful big quirks near our route that we can add or save for another day.

For me, walking Berkeley in search of quirky is pure fun – 100 percent pure,



Photo by Tom Dalzell

The wall of Democracy.

unadulterated fun. Being outdoors, walking, being nosy, compiling, cataloging, talking with people I meet. And with this walk, we will have many eyes, many stories, and many cameras to discover and capture all the quirkiness. That will make big fun even bigger.

Tom Dalzell will lead his "Quirky Berkeley" walk on Saturday, Aug. 24. Details of the walk can be found in the BPWA Walks list in this issue. ■



BPWA Walks

Walks last 2-3 hours unless otherwise noted and are free and open to all. Please note the difficulty and pace for each walk to ensure it matches your temperament and level of fitness.

DIFFICULTY

EASY: Smooth trail or pavement.

MEDIUM EASY: Some uneven surface, moderate hills.

MEDIUM: Some difficult terrain such as hills or stairs.

MEDIUM DIFFICULT: Rough surface and/or steep inclines.

DIFFICULT: Rough trail, steep hills, strenuous stretches. Only for those in good physical condition.

PACE

FAST: a vigorous pace of at least 3 mph

MODERATELY FAST: 2-3 mph

MODERATE: 1-2 mph

LEISURELY: 1 mph or less

Questions: walks@berkeleypaths.org

July 13, Saturday – Utility Box Bingo – 10 a.m.

Leader: Sandy Friedland. Meeting Place: Fountain across from the Emeryville Amtrak Station, 5885 Horton St. Transit: AC bus F, Emery-Go-Round.

Kids 4-8 will enjoy this walk to see whimsical utility boxes & public art. Each child must be accompanied by an adult and able to handle 1 1/2 miles, frequent stops and busy intersections. Bring a clipboard or hard surface to play Bingo as we walk and to design your own art at the end. Cameras recommended! Optional pizza lunch following the walk. Limited to 20 children, so please RSVP and include your child's first name and age. RAIN CANCELS. **No dogs, please. RSVP to ssf@comcast.net.** Level: EASY • Pace: LEISURELY

Aug. 3, Saturday – Highest Point in Berkeley – 10 a.m.

Leader: Paul Grunland. Meeting Place: Park Hills Gate, opposite Fire Station at 3000 Shasta Rd. Transit: AC buses #65 or #67

Do you know the location of the highest point in Berkeley? Come explore the ridgeline straddling Centennial and Shasta Roads and learn the local history of the county boundary lines in the area. Bring your camera to capture the great views. HEAVY RAIN CANCELS. **Well-behaved dogs on leash permitted.** Level: MEDIUM • Pace: MODERATE

Aug. 10, Saturday – Path-a-Thon.

Times & Leaders: see below. Meeting Place: Cragmont Rock Park, 960 Regal Rd. Transit: AC buses #65 or #67

BPWA turns 15 this year and we can't think of a better way to celebrate than enjoying the paths you've helped us to build over the years. Pick one of the three walks listed below then gather at the park at 11:30 for cake & festivities.

(Continued on Page 2)

CLIP AND SAVE

(Walks continued)

DIFFICULT – 9:15 a.m. Elsa leads a tour of seven rock parks. Lots of stairs & elevation changes. We'll maintain a fast pace to allow some time for exploring. **No dogs, please.**

MODERATE – 9:30 a.m. Colleen leads this walk with views & a peek at the new Twain Path. Moderate pace but plenty of steps & steep spots. **Well-behaved dogs on leash permitted.**

EASY – 10:15 a.m. Lynn will lead a perfect trek for those who want to take it easy or smell the roses. Some moderate uphill & one unpaved, uneven path. **Well-behaved dogs on leash permitted.**

Aug. 24, Saturday – Quirky Berkeley – 10 a.m.

Leader: Tom Dalzell. Meeting Place: Ashby BART, corner of Adeline & Emerson. Transit: BART, AC #18 or F.

Tom Dalzell has walked every block of street, path, and alley in Berkeley, cataloging and photographing the physical and visible manifestations of our city's quirkiness. On this southside walk we'll view eccentric architecture, front yard art, and only-in-Berkeley whimsy. This long walk will cover several miles, so the pace will be moderate to ensure we cover all the sights. There will be a break midway with light refreshments. (See article on page 1). **RAIN CANCELS. Well-behaved dogs on leash permitted.**

Level: EASY • Pace: MODERATE

Sept. 10, Tuesday – Seasons: A Year on the Paths: Late Summer – 6 p.m.

Leader: Emma Morris. Meeting Place: Spruce St. at Acacia Walk (unmarked, bet. 619 and 625 Spruce). Transit: AC buses #65 and #67

In the 3rd installment of our 2013 seasonal walk series we celebrate late summer. Bring your favorite method of recording (camera, art pens & small pad, journal, etc.). We'll finish at Dorothy Bolte Park on Spruce for a post-walk soiree and to compare notes. **Heavy RAIN CANCELS. Well-behaved dogs on leashes permitted.**

Level: MEDIUM • Pace: MODERATE

Sept. 21, Saturday – Ina Coolbrith & Friends – 10 a.m.

Leader: Aleta George. Meeting Place: Cragmont Rock Park, 960 Regal Rd. Transit: AC buses #65 and #67

Join writer Aleta George for a loop walk in the hills on roads and pathways named after Bay Area literary pioneers. Aleta discovered this themed walk while working on her biography-in-progress of Ina Coolbrith, California's first poet laureate and Oakland's first public librarian. On the walk, Aleta will recite several of Coolbrith's poems and tell stories about Coolbrith and her colleagues Bret Harte, John Muir and Charles Keeler. (See article on page 3). **RAIN CANCELS. Well-behaved dogs on leashes welcome.**

Level: MEDIUM • Pace: MODERATE

BPWA News and Notes



Photo by M. Gray

Spring Meeting. L to R: Dave Weinstein, Elizabeth Stampe, Paul Rosenbloom and Bruce Beyeart.

JOIN US AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Save the date – Wednesday, Sept. 11 – for BPWA's fall membership meeting. This annual get-together is always a great time to reconnect, get updated on BPWA's efforts, and hear from thoughtful, entertaining speakers. More details will be forthcoming in our e-newsletter and on our website:

Contacting BPWA

Walks: walks@berkeleypaths.org

General: info@berkeleypaths.org



Photo by Berkeley Historical Society

Councilmember Susan Wengraf presents John Underbill of the Berkeley Historical Society with a proclamation commemorating the Rose Walk Centennial.

www.berkeleypaths.org

HELP US MAINTAIN OUR PATHS

Have you come across damage, vandalism, deterioration, vegetation overgrowth or any other issues or concerns as you've walked your favorite paths recently?

Please let us know. Send an e-mail to info@berkeleypaths.org and let our path maintenance crews know which paths need attention. You can also sign up to volunteer for path work parties by e-mailing path building leader Charlie Bowen at charlie_paths@comcast.net.

WANDER BY AT THE SOLANO STROLL

Mark your calendar for this year's Solano Stroll. BPWA will have a booth at the annual event, which is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 8. We'll have all kinds of helpful information for those interested in learning about Berkeley's path system, as well as Path Wanderer merchandise, including t-shirts, caps, posters and the most recent edition of our exclusive map



Photo by M. Gray

A damaged portion of the balustrade along Fountain Walk.

of all Berkeley's paths. Stop by and say hello!

HELP RESTORE FOUNTAIN WALK

Friends of the Fountain and Circle, a BPWA ally, is raising funds to repair and restore the century-old balustrade that lines Fountain Walk and The Circle at Marin and The Arlington in North Berkeley. Tax-deductible donations of any size are welcome to ensure that this key element of Berkeley's first public art project lasts another 100 years. Send check to Friends of the Fountain and Walk, P.O. Box 7343, Berkeley, CA 94707, or donate securely online via PayPal at:

BPWA Board Meetings

The BPWA Board meets on the third Thursday of each month, except April, Oct, and Dec. Meetings are at 7 p.m. at Live Oak Community Center in Live Oak Park. Board meetings are open to all.

Finding Poetry and Art on Berkeley's Paths

—Aleta George

She was California's first poet laureate, the first ever designated by any state when she received the title in 1915. She is Ina Donna Coolbrith (1841-1928), and I am at work on a biography of her.

One of the strategies I use to get focused writing time is to go on mini writing retreats at friends' houses when they go out-of-town. One of my favorite retreats is in Berkeley, up the hill from the Gourmet Ghetto.



When at my friend's home several years ago, I decided to take a lunchtime walk. I was working on a chapter that features many of Ina's friends and contemporaries, including Bret Harte, Charles Warren

Stoddard and Mark Twain. Their stories still buzzed in my head when I set out without a map or planned route. I only knew a few of the major streets at the time, just enough not to get lost.

I found myself on Euclid Avenue, on a portion too flat for getting much aerobic exercise, and was looking for an opportunity to go up when I came around a bend and saw a sign for what looked like stairs.

When I got close enough to read the sign, I couldn't believe what I read: Bret Harte Way! Harte was Ina's editor at the renowned literary magazine *The Overland Monthly*, and he called her the "pearl of our tribe." It was as if I had conjured him.

At the top of the stairs things got weirder when I came to Keith Avenue.

Artist William Keith illustrated Ina's second poetry collection, and she adored him. Then I came to Sterling Path, named after George Sterling, the poet who Ina believed should inherit her laurel crown (though he committed suicide before he could). I also found Keeler Path, a lovely wooded trail that poet and self-taught ornithologist Charles Keeler would have loved as much as he loved Ina.



Charles Keeler

That same day I discovered paths, ways and lanes named after Joaquin Miller, Charles Warren Stoddard, John Muir and Mark Twain, all of whom were Ina's friends. And when I reached Parnassus Road, I thought: how perfect. In Greek mythology, Parnassus was home to the gods and muses.

Since that day I have taken many walks with Ina's friends in the Berkeley Hills. Since she doesn't have a path, way or lane named after her (why not, I wonder?), I bring her along by reciting her poems as I walk.

I haven't memorized the entire poem that she wrote for the first graduating class of the University of California, though the last stanza could easily have been inspired by the view seen from these hills:

[I] saw the Gate
Burn in the sunset; the thin thread of mist
Creep white across the Sausalito hills;
Till the day darkened down the ocean rim,
The sunset purple slipped from Tamalpais,
And bay and sky were bright with sudden stars.

Aleta George will lead an "Ina Coolbrith & Friends" walk on Saturday, Sept. 21. Details can be found in the BPWA Walks list in this issue. ■

Berkeley Hiking History: Walks About Berkeley, 1909

—Michael Gray

Even a century later, this excerpt from an essay by UC Berkeley English and rhetoric professor Cornelius Beach Bradley (from the book *A Berkeley Year: A Sheaf of Nature Essays*, published by the Women's Auxiliary of the First Unitarian Church of Berkeley) captures the spirit and wonder of a hike through the Berkeley hills today:

"The casual observer might find very little of promise in the Berkeley hills to lure him on to their exploration. ... The imagination pictures no secret nooks, no wooded ravines, no crag or waterfall behind the straggling screen of fern and scrub that fringes its waterways. Yet, after



Photo by Colleen Neff

Wildcat Path

all, the charm of surprise is a veritable feature of the walks about Berkeley – surprise not keen and startling, to be sure, but genuine and of the quality that does not pall by frequent repetition. Thus it is that the number and variety of these rambles is a source of unending pleasure to those that have come to know them."

What's your favorite ramble through Berkeley, hills or flats? Send us a brief (150 words maximum) description of a hike or path you've found memorable. E-mail it to bpwanewsletter@gmail.com. Make sure to include your name. We'll publish selected entries in future newsletters and on our website. ■

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 BPPF (Berkeley Partners for Parks) to:

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

BPWA Membership/Donation Form

Please print clearly

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Telephone Number (optional) _____

I am enclosing \$5 for membership new renewal

I am also enclosing a donation of _____

Please make checks payable to our fiscal parent, Berkeley Partners for Parks (BPPF)

I am interested in volunteering

Berkeley Path Wanderers Association Summer 2013

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 volunteer group of community members who have come together to increase public awareness of the city of Berkeley's pathways. Our activities include guided path walks, the mapping of Berkeley's path network, the building of paths that are proposed, and the restoration of those that need maintenance.

Improving our paths: Halkin Walk work under way

– Michael Gray

BPWA work crews led by Charlie Bowen and Steve Glaeser have started improvements on the upper portion of Halkin Walk, which begins on Euclid Avenue between Poplar and Acacia and climbs up to Hilldale Avenue, just below Grizzly Peak Boulevard.

This is one of the most challenging projects our volunteer workers have undertaken, Steve says. The bottom of the pathway, near Euclid, is very steep, rising 32 feet over a run of just 44 feet. That has required employing a new technique for installing switchbacks so that the climb for path users is safe and not too strenuous.

As of June 1, 16 steps had been installed, covering a quarter of the steep por-



tion. Once that job is done, there is an additional 80 feet of elevation where steps will be installed.

Says Steve: "I would love to get it done by the end of the year, but six months is a short time for a job this big. My guess is that it would be sometime next year."

He adds: "I am looking forward to the point where we can accommodate community work parties because there is a very pleasant green, open space near the top with a wonderful view."

You can get on an e-mail list to volunteer for community work parties by sending an e-mail to Charlie at charlie_paths@comcast.net.

MICHAEL GRAY, newsletter editor (non-board)

ELSA TRANTER, external events

BETSY MUELLER, membership/correspondence

EMMA MORRIS, walks/volunteer coordinator

MARY ROSS LYNCH, webmaster

JANE LEVY, internal events

LORI KOHLSTADT, treasurer/archivist

ANGUS DUNSTAN, online sales

LYNN DEREGOWSKI, walks

KEITH SKINNER, president

Board Members

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