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New BPWA Map, Improved Website
Make Path Wandering Easier than Ever

By Sandy Friedland

We proudly announce the arrival of the 7th edition of our classic map and the redesign of our website. We’re doing all we can to help you take a great walk!

Our path map has sold more than 32,000 copies since the first edition appeared in 2002. To emphasize that it is also a terrific street map, we decided to name it Berkeley and Its Pathways. The cover also features new artwork, a reproduction of Kathy Geske’s watercolor of El Mirador Path.

The map itself is more accurate and readable, with bright new colors. Colleen Neff, chair of the BPWA map committee, started collecting corrections and suggestions soon after publication of the 6th edition.

“I was very lucky to have a team who know Berkeley’s streets and path really well,” she said. “They worked hard to make this the most accurate and friendly map of our city.”

Other improvements include the addition of the recently completed Berty Olds Path and Upper Halkin Walk, better contrast between major and minor streets, and a truer rendering of Garber Path.

The map also has new access paths on each end of the Buchanan Street pedestrian and bicycle “bridge” that goes under Highway 80/80E, providing a safe route to the Bay Trail. As always, the new map is on tear-and-water-resistant paper and has bicycle boulevards, BART lines and stations, and street barriers. It also includes some paths in Strawberry Canyon, Tilden Park, Kensington, Eastshore State Park, and Cesar Chavez Park.

Our revamped website debuted in October as we unpacked the new maps. However, the upgrade actually began two years ago, when former BPWA board member Mary Lynch converted the site to WordPress, a website design and management program. John Kenny, our current web master, continues to build on Mary’s foundation.

The most notable change is our new home page. It now features rotating photos of our past events, clear links to future ones, and a simpler, more intuitive menu. One-click “hot buttons” make it easy to join BPWA or buy a map.

John also enhanced the path section of the website. A roster of paths can be viewed either numerically or alphabetically. Each name link goes to a page with pictures of that path and an interactive map of its location. A table gives statistics, like the elevation gain.

In addition, the list of places that sell our map has been updated, and each name links to that vendor’s website.

Still to come, says John, are enhancements in the self-guided walk section. “I’d like to see ten curated walk descriptions that each will reliably guide people along an interesting route.”

He adds that the archive of past BPWA walks also will be revised. Routes will link to any supplementary materials that leaders handed out.

So get our new map and hit the paths, or explore them from your chair at berkeleypaths.org. Or do both!

BPWA Walks
Walks proceed at 15 to 2 mph and last 2-3 hours unless otherwise noted. They are free and open to all. Questions about a walk? Well in advance of the date, write: walks@berkeleypaths.org

Weather cancellations will be posted the morning of the walk on berkeleypaths.org

Well-behaved dogs on leashes are okay unless a descriptions says they are not.

New Year’s Resolution Walk
Thursday, January 1 @ 1 p.m.
Leader: Glen Lindwall
Start: 500 corner of The Arlington & Covemty Rd., Kensington (at bus stop)
Transit: AC Bus #9
Welcome 2015 with BPWA once again as we walk near the Berkeley-Kensington border on the first afternoon of the year. With steep and steep streets, this 3-miles walk will help burn off those extra holiday calories. We may walk along the ridge line again or cruise the paths below The Arlington if the higher trails are too muddy.

Little Free Libraries Tour
Saturday, January 10 @ 10 a.m.
Leader: Colleen Neff
Start: Live Oak Park Community Center, 1301 Shattuck Ave. near Bernmayn.
Transit: AC Buses #7 and #18
Little free libraries have become a worldwide phenomenon, and they are popping up all over Berkeley. (See story on p. 6.) Join us for a 1.5-mile walk to visit at least seven of these book-sharing structures in North Berkeley. We’ll also chat with some of the library stewards about their experiences. If you’d like, bring a book or two to exchange at one of our stops. The walk will be moderately paced with hills and stops.

Pooches, Poems, Parks & Paths
Friday, February 13 @ 4 p.m.
Leaders: Wally & Figgy
Start: NE corner of Solano Avenue and The Alameda
Transit: AC Buses #7, #18, and #25
Love is in the air in February, so come with us as we explore some of what we adore in Berkeley. Two of our four-footed members, Wally and Figgy, will lead this low-tally two-mile, dog-friendly walk. We’ll visit their favorite parks in the Thousand Oaks area and the poetry wall on upper Yosemite Steps. With luck, we might spot a goat. Count on a well-deserved dog biscuit break at John Hinkel Park. The route includes a few uphill paths and a rustic one.
BPWA President’s Year-End Message

By Lori Kohlstaedt

We finish 2014 with one new path opened and another on the way. Upper Halken Walks, between Euclid and 11th Ave, was completed in April. Because it rises 84 feet in a single block, we needed a series of tricky switchbacks. The steep grade also meant that handrails were essential, and they are by far the most expensive path improvement we make. Paving them for you from our modest treasury was a serious stretch and our path-building budget had to be limited for the rest of this year.

BPWA’s path-building Hotshots now are finishing Tilden Path. By early next year, it will provide a pleasant new way to walk, from Grizzly Peak Boulevard to Shasta Road.

Since 1998, BPWA volunteers have cut the number of unfinished, inaccessible paths in half, from 50 to 25 of Berkeley’s 136 numbered public pathways. As we draw nearer to having a completely walkable path network, we are turning toward maintaining and improving those paths.

For years BPWA has partnered with other groups to trim and weed along paths. Last month, for example, Cal students pitched in on Berkeley Project Day on El Mirador Path. In a couple of hours, they pruned thick overhanging vegetation, pulled weeds, and swept debris until both the segments of the path were clean and easily passable.

In fact, we are starting a new volunteer group to concentrate on path maintenance and beautification. To join, please send a message to info@berkeleypathways.org.

BPWA’s guided walks continue to be wildly popular, with fifty or more enthusiasts turning up for some. Highlights this year included the challenging all-path-in-Berkeley series, planned and led by our two youngest Path Wanderers, Zeke Gerwen and Jacob Lehmann; Past President Keith Skinner’s Right-Brained Berkeley walk that explored the city’s creative heritage; and a walk highlighting signs related to the Anza Trail, led by Ranger Hale Sergant. His walk was a followup to his illustrated presentation at our annual meeting.

With so many points of historical, artistic, and quirky appeal along our paths, it seems that we never run out of fascinating walks. The 24 walks planned for 2015 promise to be just as plentiful.

As this year comes to a close, it is time to renew your BPWA membership and to consider giving maps, notecards, posters or other BPWA items to friends and family. Please also consider sending a donation to support our valuable path-building education, and walk programs.

The results of your generosity will be visible when you take a walk. See you on the paths!

BPWA's guided walk on January 10th will feature many of the Little Free Libraries in North Berkeley. It will start at the Live Oak Community Center at 10 a.m. (See details on page 1.) So grab a book you no longer need and join us. Leave a book, and take another. What better way to start the new year than by sharing the love of reading with your community!

(A version of this story, with additional pictures, was published on Berkeleyside.com on October 28.)