Building Something Exceptional Together
— BPWA President Keith Skinner

All of these experiences illustrate an energized community savoring something remarkable, something accomplished by long lines of people helping another place a railroad tie. One person sharing a favorite route with others. People pooling their money and other resources to improve their neighborhood.

This year has been a busy one for BPWA. We invested heavily in the rehabilitation of our older rustic paths. We’ve learned a lot over the years and have realized that redwood isn’t as durable as we imagined and that we need more steps on many paths. So we replaced and added steps made of longer lasting eucalyptus.

We also completed three new paths. Halkin, our newest path, was one of the most challenging we’ve ever built due to the steepness of the terrain. And that means, it requires handrails and can’t be opened until we receive additional funding. The new Twain Path has just officially been renamed Betty Olds Path (see the story on page 3) after the former Council member and long time BPWA supporter. We’ve also sponsored an amazing variety of walks this year and two very different but well-received public meetings.

We can only stay healthy as an organization and continue our work with your help. We constantly face the challenge of having too few people and too many people, too little money to do the things we believe worth doing. We have maintained our membership fee at $5 per household so anyone can join us. But those fees cover just a fraction of the work and outreach BPWA does each year. We rely instead on merchandise sales and your donations to continue our path building and update and produce our map. Please take a moment before the year ends to reflect on what you can do to help, be it a donation of time or money. As Shaw said, just do whatever you can. And remember, nothing equals that feeling of building something together.

BPWA Walks
Walks last 2-3 hours unless otherwise noted and are free and open to all.

DIFFICULTY
EASY: Smooth trail or pavement.
MEDIUM EASY: Some uneven surface.
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

Jan. 1, Wed. — Stepping into the New Year — 1 p.m.
Welcome the New Year with BPWA as we once again walk the neighborhoods of the Berkeley/Kensington border on the first afternoon of the year. There will be many stairs. RAIN CANCELS. Well-behaved dogs on leash permitted. Level: MEDIUM DIFFICULT • Pace: MODERATE

Jan. 4, Sat. — Berkeley Hills Architecture and History — 10 a.m.
This hike will include early Berkeley lore and many architectural treasures. We’ll explore Greenwood Common, Rose St., Tamalpais Ave. and nearby paths. RAIN CANCELS. Well-behaved dogs on leash permitted. Level: MEDIUM • Pace: MODERATE

Jan. 26, Sunday — Whole Berkeley Walk Series: Part 1 — 11:30 a.m.
1st in a series to walk every path in Berkeley, this part will be 5.5 miles and about 2.5 hours long. Bring water & snacks. RAIN CANCELS. No dogs please. Level: MEDIUM DIFFICULT • Pace: MODERATELY FAST

Feb. 9, Sunday — Quirky Berkeley: Northeast Hills — 10 a.m.
We’ll discover the quirky side of NE Berkeley and Berkeleyans expressing their individuality through art, architecture, topology and much more. 4 miles long. We’ll take a break midway at Dorothy Bolte Park. CANCELS. No dogs please. Level: MEDIUM EASY • Pace: MODERATE

(Continued on Page 2)
El Cerrito’s Madera Hillside Open Space — The Missing Link

We recently spoke to David Weinstein of the El Cerrito Trail Trekkers about his organization’s efforts to convert a parcel of previously private land to public open space.

BPWA: What is the Madera Hillside Open Space and why is it important?

DW: It’s an 8-acre parcel with a meadow, woodland, and three creeks that sits between the two otherwise disconnected sections of El Cerrito’s Hillside Natural Area. It provides a natural connection between these two sections of a 90-or-so-acre open space preserve right in the heart of town. Once the city owns the property and can build and improve trails on it, people will be able to walk easily from the southern portion to the northern section without having to leave wild land and detour for several blocks along sidewalks.

BPWA: What role are the Trail Trekkers playing in the campaign and who else is involved?

DW: We’ve had our eye on the property since we were founded four years ago. We led hikes on it, even when it was still owned by a developer, in order to generate interest. We spoke to members of the City Council and to the Trust for Public Land (TFPL). The El Cerrito High School mountain biking team has also played a major role. Gary Hill, coach of the team, is the one who learned the property was for sale. Friends of Five Creeks, which has done restoration work in the Hills Area for years, quickly joined the effort too. Our three groups formed the El Cerrito Open Space Campaign to raise funds from the community for this purchase.

BPWA: How much money is involved and how will the acquisition be funded?

DW: The land costs $475,000. Another $100,000 will cover acquisition, legal, staffing and other costs incurred by TFPL, the nonprofit that negotiated this amazing deal and is helping raise funds. More will be raised as well to cover habitat and other improvements; the exact amount depends on which grants we receive. Funding will come from the city’s share of regional Park Bond funds. TFPL believes they will raise at least $250,000 in federal and state grants. We in the community have promised to raise $100,000. The land was acquired this fall by TFPL, which had to buy it because the owner needed to sell in calendar 2013 for tax reasons and the city didn’t have enough money. TFPL never buys land to hold. The City Council promised that the city would buy the land from TFPL in 2014 after extracting a promise from the community that we would raise $100,000.

BPWA: How can people help?

DW: We’ve raised $20,000 so far and need $80,000 more. The Hillside Natural Area is of regional importance. Berkeleyans and others who treasure open space are invited to visit the site, either on their own or on a Trekker-guided, on-demand hike. Contact me to arrange. We need funds, and we need volunteers to lead hikes, call potential donors, and help put on events. We also need people to spread the word among their friends. For information or to donate, go to: www.ectrailtrekkers.org

City of Berkeley Draft Hazard Mitigation Plan Released

Our path system is most frequently used for convenient pedestrian travel and general recreation. However, it also provides an important escape route during emergencies like fires, landslides, and earthquakes. The City of Berkeley has included the paths in the recently released draft of the 2014 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. For instance, the plan notes that Upper Covert Path provides an escape route that is nearly a half mile shorter than streets and sidewalks.

You can read the entire plan on the City’s website at: www.cityofberkeley.info/mitigation
regularly for both utilitarian and recreational purposes. Prior to the big day, the two had covered all the paths during numerous individual walks. Jacob is a math whiz who also runs cross-country, studies the piano and enjoys playing games with his family. Zeke came up with the idea for the mega-hike. He’s a self-confessed cycling freak who completed a month-long bike tour from Mexico to Seattle this past summer. But like his friend, he also enjoys a life of the mind: reading, writing, algebra, history and science. Both boys are preparing for their bar mitzvahs.

The two friends covered most of the alphabet, traveling paths from Acacia to Yosemite. They rambled from Vistamonte Trail in the northeastern corner of town to the Kensington border, then crossed the southern tip of Albany to West Berkeley. There they picked up the Ohlone Greenway into South Berkeley, crossed town to The Crossways, then doubled back and headed into the Claremont Hills, in and out of Oakland to Panoramic Hill. Then they sliced through campus into the central hills, up to Atlas Path, and through Park Hills to Wildcat Path at the Contra Costa County border. Then, finally, home again.

“I limped all the next day and wouldn’t want to go that far again at least for another few months — and possibly ever,” Jacob reported.

While the young men may have crossed extreme path wandering off of their personal bucket lists, they have agreed to lead a series of walks for BPWA that will include all of Berkeley’s paths. Zeke and Jacob have divided their colossal route into several smaller excursions averaging roughly six miles in length.

The series will begin early in 2014, with the walks usually scheduled at monthly intervals. For some time, BPWA has wanted to devise a way to formally recognize people who walk all the paths. For the duration of this series, we’ll keep a log of the people who start and finish each walk. After the last walk, those who have covered the entire route will be presented with a pin or patch.

Given the length of each route — triple that of our average walks — participants should be able to tolerate numerous hills and maintain a 2- to 2 ½-mph pace. The average duration of each walk will be roughly three hours. Participants should bring sufficient water and wear suitable clothes and shoes. Snacks, walking sticks and/or a camera may also come in handy. Once the the series has concluded, we’ll publish the route of each segment in the Self-Guided Walks section of our website.

As for Jacob and Zeke, they have since led a MeetUp walk — a “warm-up” for the upcoming series — and organized other walks for their friends and classmates. When asked about their favorite paths, Zeke names Covert Path. Jacob seconds Covert, but also lists Vistamonte, Indian Trail, Acacia Walk, Wildcat and Fred Herbert. Who says it has to be just one?

It’s encouraging and inspiring to watch a new generation of path wanderers emerge, to watch them fall in love with our city’s paths as have many of us before them. They are BPWA’s future. They offer hope that the legacy we treasure will be preserved for years to come and that generations of people will continue to enjoy the benefits of the paths in health, happiness and the buoyant spirit of youth.

All Over the Map — Keith Skinner

“Every good hike brings you eventually back home.” — Edward Abbey

At 7 a.m. on a Wednesday morning in early August, Jacob Lehmann Duke and his longtime friend, Zeke Gerwein, set out on an adventure they had been planning for more than a month. By the time they returned home that evening, they had accomplished something remarkable. Epic. Perhaps even a little crazy. They had walked every path in Berkeley in a single day.

“We walked between all the paths and never got on a bus, in a car, or on BART,” Jacob said proudly.

Thirty-six miles in 13 hours. Their route ranged from a nadir of 72 feet in the flatlands to a zenith of 1,297 feet at the crest of Summit Road: 5,405 feet of total elevation gain and 4,727 feet of total elevation loss. It was an incredible feat, especially for such young men: Zeke is 12; Jacob 11.

“After 15 miles, we were exhausted but somehow kept going,” Jacob said of their experience. “After 25 miles, we rested at my grandma’s house and were barely able to move on.”

Zeke and Jacob, buddies since preschool, are big fans of Berkeley’s paths, using them

Partners for Parks (BPFP) to:

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

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 BPFP (Berkeley Partners for Parks) to:

BPWA Membership/Donation

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

☐ I am interested in volunteering

Please make checks payable to our fiscal parent, Berkeley Partners for Parks (BPFP)
Berkeley Path Wanderers Association
1442-A Walnut St. #269
Berkeley, CA 94709

www.berkeleypaths.org

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Berkeley Path Wanderers Association  Winter 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.

Inside the First Church of Christ Scientist during Jacque Ensign’s People’s Park Era Revisited Walk on Nov. 3.

Do you know where this is? Find out on the Quirky Berkeley Walk – Northeast Hills on Feb. 9, 2014.