BPWA Annual Meeting Oct. 18: Featuring Rails-To-Trails Conservancy – Healthy Places for Healthy People

The Berkeley Path Wanderers Association is as much about people as it is about paths. This year’s Annual Meeting should offer a combination of both. Paths invite exploration, connect communities and offer respite from the noise and bustle of our urban lives. While BPWA works diligently on local path projects, Rails-To-Trails Conservancy (RTC) works at a national level to transform abandoned rail lines into usable pedestrian paths and bikeways. Steve Schweigerdt, RTC Trail Development Manager, will be our featured speaker this year.

The National Trails System Act was signed into law in 1968 but it was nearly 18 years before RTC arrived on the scene – H. Richard Livengood, RTC’s President and CEO. RTC now grown to more than 150,000 members and has 20,000 miles of trails. They have managed their exponential growth by working closely with local organizations on projects such as the Santa Fe Right-Of-Way in Berkeley, the Richmond Greenway, the Cross Alameda...
Don Kreiss: BPWA’s stair building guru

—Glen Lindwall

The Path Wanderers have been fortunate to find outstanding suppliers for the materials we need for our path-building. For instance, we get our steps from Bernie Lenhoff at Green Waste Recycle Yard. The steps are cut from Blue Gum Eucalyptus salvaged from people’s back yards, the “urban forest”. It works well as landscape timber in contact with the ground since it is highly rot resistant and the steps should last at least twenty years. It is also the cheapest possible timber that there is.

The steps are held in place by driving lengths of rebar through the two holes that have been drilled in the wood at the recycle yard. Rebar, or reinforcing steel bar, is normally used to increase tensile strength in poured concrete, but is also perfect for our needs.

When we needed a new source of rebar for our steps a few years ago, we were delighted that we got more than just a good price. Don Kreiss, owner of Don Kreiss Rebar, has significantly improved the rebar for our use. He cuts the rebar in a way that results in a point on one end and carefully avoids leaving any burrs, making driving the bars much easier. He has also arranged it so that he can get one extra piece out of each 20 foot length of rebar, eliminating the waste we formerly had. Not only that, but Don actually sells us rebar below his cost: Don is an avid mountain biker and loves to encourage access to trails and stairs.

The Path Wanderers have been fortunate to find outstanding suppliers for the materials we need for our path-building. For instance, we get our steps from Bernie Lenhoff at Green Waste Recycle Yard. The steps are cut from Blue Gum Eucalyptus salvaged from people’s back yards, the “urban forest”. It works well as landscape timber in contact with the ground since it is highly rot resistant and the steps should last at least twenty years. It is also the cheapest possible timber that there is.

The steps are held in place by driving lengths of rebar through the two holes that have been drilled in the wood at the recycle yard. Rebar, or reinforcing steel bar, is normally used to increase tensile strength in poured concrete, but is also perfect for our needs.

When we needed a new source of rebar for our steps a few years ago, we were delighted that we got more than just a good price. Don Kreiss, owner of Don Kreiss Rebar, has significantly improved the rebar for our use. He cuts the rebar in a way that results in a point on one end and carefully avoids leaving any burrs, making driving the bars much easier. He has also arranged it so that he can get one extra piece out of each 20 foot length of rebar, eliminating the waste we formerly had. Not only that, but Don actually sells us rebar below his cost: Don is an avid mountain biker and loves to encourage access to trails and stairs.

Pouring the concrete foundation for the stairs on La Loma Path

—Photo, Steve Glaeser

Steve Glaeser (left) and Don Kreiss laying the base lumber for the stairs

Some paths need more than eucalyptus steps. Our most recently completed path, La Loma Path, had a steep section at the top where our standard steps were not adequate. Master path-builder Charlie Bowen sent out pleas for help with designing and building a set of stairs in that top section, a task that the Path Wanderers had never previously faced. The stairs were designed for us back in 2006 by Matthew Armour. When actual construction began, Don Kreiss came through again, volunteering his time and expertise to teach the Path Wanderers how to build a stairway.

Don taught us how to break the process into modules that can be worked on independently, since even minor calculation errors can cause serious problems when building stairs. Don bought the best deal on the lumber we needed and taught us tricks like painting cut ends with a copper-based wood preservative to make the wood last longer. Then he dove in to the hands-on construction, leading the way with everything from carpentry to pouring the concrete that anchors the steps. Don kept the crew laughing with his upbeat personality combined with his can-do attitude.

Contacting BPWA
Walks: walks@berkeleypaths.org
General: info@berkeleypaths.org

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.
Featured Walk: Exploring Berkeley’s Literary Legacy

—Lynn Deregowski

Walking the streets of Berkeley, one cannot help but notice that it is a hotbed of creativity and imagination. From the colorful fashion statements of the residents to the unconventional art displayed in many front yards, self-expression is everywhere. It is therefore no wonder that Berkeley has been a place of inspiration for numerous authors and poets. On November 10 join the BPWA as we explore the neighborhoods of Berkeley’s resident writers. [See walk listings for details]

Our tour of Berkeley will be led by UC Berkeley English and Philosophy student Andrew David King. King became interested in this subject when researching the correspondence between Lawrence Ferlinghetti and others about the obscenity trial involving Allen Ginsberg’s Howl. He has since published an article on the local writing scene as part of Ploughshares magazine’s Literary Boroughs series.

“Berkeley’s literary life is restless and mercurial, but the university and the city’s art-friendly disposition have consistently drawn some of the greatest writers of the past century to the East Bay,” says King. “Much of this history is hard to find, but is carried forward by the authors who live and work there today.”

Ginsberg wrote sections of Howl in a cottage behind 1624 Milvia Street. The structure has unfortunately been demolished, but across the street the Poetry Garden was created to honor the creative legacy of Berkeley poets and poet publications.

The Poetry Garden will be a stop on the tour. We’ll also visit the former residences of poet Jack Spicer and writer Jack London. There will be a visit to the site of poet Bern Porter’s old bookstore and the Poetry Wall downtown. King will also discuss some of the authors who graduated from Berkeley High School, including Philip K. Dick, Ursula K. Le Guin and Thornton Wilder.

Walk leader King is a staff blogger for The Kenyon Review where he writes articles and hosts interviews about poetry. More information on King can be found at his blog: andrewdavidking.wordpress.com.

The Iron Gate to the Alan Ginsburg Poetry Garden

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
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 ____________

☐ I am interested in volunteering

—Photo, Lynn Deregowski

Enjoy views like this on the 3rd Annual BPWA Long Walk

Pack a lunch, water, and plenty of sunscreen and join our walk from Orinda BART to Rockridge BART on Oct. 6. See walk listings for details.

Sunday Streets is coming to Berkeley!

October 14th, 2012, 11a.m. – 4p.m.
Shattuck Avenue will be closed through downtown Berkeley for 17 blocks from Rose Street to Haste Street.

Open Streets initiatives temporarily close streets to automobile traffic, so that people may use them for walking, bicycling, dancing, playing, and socializing. The many activities will include a Kids’ Bike Rodeo, Free Bike Repair, a Climbing Wall, and, of course, the Berkeley Path Wanderers Association booth (between Rose and Vine)! For a full list of activities and more information see: http://www.sundaystreetsberkeley.com http://openstreetsproject.org/
Berkeley Path Wanderers Association

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.

Avoid the year-end rush. Renew your membership now if you see "Mem 12" by your name. "Mem 13" means you have another year on your membership.