

100th anniversary of Marin Circle Fountain, Sunday 2 p.m.

On Sunday, October 16, from 2–4 p.m., the Friends of the Fountain and Walk are hosting a party on the grassy patch between Mendocino and Los Angeles Avenues – just below the Marin Circle – to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Marin Circle Fountain. Thanks to donations from local businesses and neighbors, refreshments will be provided.

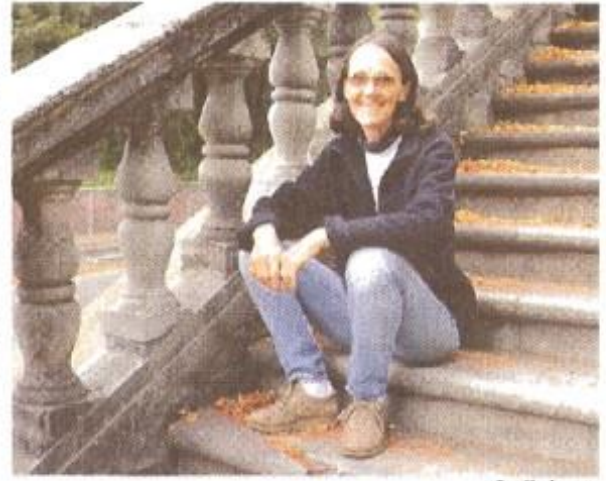
However, neighborhood organizer Sara Holmes is encouraging donations to support the Friends latest undertaking: repairing the balustrades, which encircle the Circle and line the Walk.

For more information about Sunday's celebration, go to www.friendsofthefountainandwalk.org or by contacting Sara Holmes at harvardholmes@comcast.net or (510) 526-5347.

A storied past

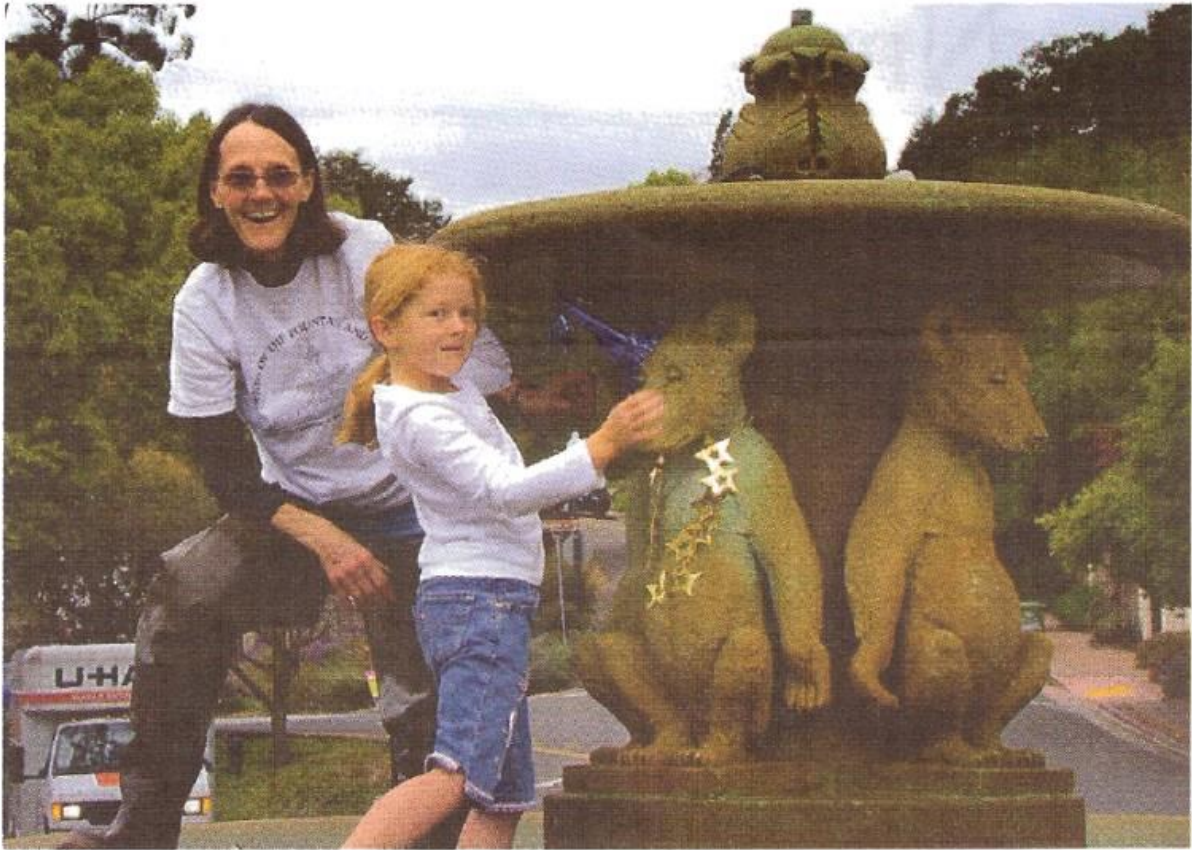
In the early 1900s, land speculators Joseph Mason & Duncan McDuffie were laying out the streets of one of Berkeley's newest subdivisions, the Northbrae Tract. Near its geographic center, they made The Marin Circle, a roundabout originally planned as a hub for rail traffic, the central design element. And because city leaders at that time were scheming for Berkeley to become the state capital, they named the avenues in the area after California counties: Marin, Solano, Mendocino, Los Angeles, El Dorado, Yolo, Santa Barbara, et cetera.

A Cal grad and an early member of the Sierra Club, McDuffie was a visionary land developer and only employed
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Staff photos

Last Saturday, Sara Holmes led the Friends of the Fountain and Walk in their preparations for this weekend's 100th anniversary celebration of the Marin Circle.



This past Saturday, during the monthly "First Saturday" work day, Sara Holmes, top, had help placing decorations on the Marin Circle Fountain. As part of the clean up, Harvard Holmes, right, checked on the pumps and other hardware. Each month, as part of the workday, Barbara Robben, left, of El Dorado Avenue gets after the dandelions. The Friends of the Fountain and Walk are currently raising funds to repair damaged balustrades.

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the most talented architects, landscapers and artisans for his projects. It was McDuffie who retained leading Bay Area architect John Galen Howard to design architectural features for the tract. *And subsequently, it was Howard who commissioned sculptor Arthur Putnam to create the fountain – forever distinguished for its four grizzly bear cubs.*

In 1958, a truck barreling down Marin Avenue lost control, careened through the traffic barrier and destroyed the fountain beyond repair. And that's how the site remained for 35 years, until the early 1990s, when two separate neighborhood groups were organized by Mayor Shirley Dean into a formidable community-action committee: the Friends of the Fountain and Walk.

The group raised \$100,000 in cash by soliciting donations from individuals and local businesses and another \$75,000 in terms of donated services – making it the largest grassroots project Berke-

ley had ever seen. With assistance from sculptor Sarita Camille Waite, the fountain was reconstructed. And in a grand ceremony on September 15, 1996, Mayor Dean rededicated the fountain.

A beep and thumbs up

In 1971, Sara and Harvard Holmes moved to 900 block of Shattuck Avenue. One day in the early 90s, Sara was on walk near the Marin Circle, when she noticed a sign on a stake soliciting volunteers to rebuild the fountain. Sara called the number, and since that time *has had something to do with the maintenance of both the fountain and the walk.*

Ever since the fountain was returned to its original glory in 1996, Sara has spearheaded maintenance efforts by organizing "First Saturday Work Parties" at which neighbors come together as "The Friends" to manage tasks beyond the scope of City staff.

On the first Saturday of each month, from 9 ~ 11 a.m. rain or shine, the Friends de-soap the

fountain (when necessary), remove any weeds around its perimeter, sweep debris and remove graffiti, which often appears along the Walk – the staircase that ascends from Del Norte above the Solano Tunnel.

It's a lot of work and a true neighborhood effort. Tools are stored at a nearby residence, and volunteers show up like clockwork each month to do what they can.

Barbara Bobben of El Dorado Avenue, for example, has a thing for removing dandelions. Harvard Holmes' specialty is tending to the pumps and other hardware that keep the fountain going. Others sweep and clean.

Meanwhile the broader community seems to appreciate the monthly work effort. As evidence, neighbors whizzing around the circle en route to various destinations often beep their horns and give thumbs up signaling their appreciation of the volunteers – and especially Sara and Harvard Holmes.