

**Volunteers,
KaBoom set to
build playground**

The city of Cupertino is partnering with the Rotary Club of Cupertino and KaBoom in a modern “barn raising” on June 6 at the newly renovated Blackberry Farm, where volunteers are scheduled to construct a playground. Construction begins at 8 a.m., and the build day will include food, music and activities for children.

KaBoom is a nonprofit group that works with communities to build children’s playgrounds in one day. It has built more than 1,500 playgrounds in the country. The Rotary Club of Cupertino has lined up volunteers and donated \$10,000 for the playground.

The project is part of Phase 1B of the ongoing Stevens Creek Corridor project. It coincides with new trails that will link McClellan Ranch Park to Blackberry Farm Picnic area. Blackberry Farm’s grand re-opening is July 4.

For more information, contact the Parks and Recreation office at 408.777.3120. To learn more about KaBoom, go to www.kaboom.org.

**History society
holding BBQ,
live auction**

The Cupertino Historical Society and Museum is holding its “Brother Can You Spare a Dime?” barbecue on June 28 from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Picchetti Winery, 13100 Montebello Road. The event will include a live auction and live music.

The cost is \$50 per person. RSVP by June 19. For more information, call 408.973.1495.

NEWS



Photograph courtesy of Lee family

Neighbors welcome Russell Lee as he completes the final stretch of his 160-mile hike from the Gold Country back to his Cupertino home.

Cupertino man celebrates birthday with 160-mile hike

**Lee walks home
from Gold Country**

By MATT WILSON

With a 50th birthday approaching, Cupertino resident Russell Lee was starting to feel his mortality. To mark the milestone, Lee decided to take a 160-mile walk from California’s Gold Country back to Silicon Valley.

“On my 50th birthday, I wanted to be somewhere far from home,” he said. “The original conception was to be on an island or a safari somewhere. As preparation started last year, the economy went in the toilet. This was a backup plan.”

The Lee family has a second home in the Glencoe, about three hours from Cupertino by automobile. Lee used this as his starting point on May 15 for a long adventure back home that wrapped up on May 27.

Lee had no plans to “rough it.” Sleeping on the side of the road or pitching a tent was out of the question, so the family meticulously mapped out a route and Lee and his wife, Gail, made reservations for every stop along the way.

Certain areas on the route proved difficult without the aid of a car. The couple looked for nooks and crannies that remain unknown even in the age of Mapquest and Google Earth to safely get around such barriers as Interstate 5 and the San Joaquin River. Gail Lee even solicited help from the city manager of Lathrop.

Lee went through a full physical before doctors approved his plan. He trained for the adventure by walking to and from work, five times a week.

During his trek Lee spent about six hours a day walking in full stride with walking poles. Most meals were eaten in restaurants. When a diner was not available, he packed a snack.

Lee traveled light and washed his few pairs of walking clothes with shampoo each night. He also packed travel size versions of necessities and a laptop to update his online journal.

“There’s nothing sweeter than checking into a hotel and taking a nice shower, flopping down and falling asleep for an hour,” he said.

The journey got off to a rough start, however. The first few days were marked by an unseasonable heat wave, and Lee’s mind and body were

still in transition. On May 18, he shuffled 22 miles in 108-degree weather.

“The first half was pretty grueling between the huge heat wave and getting all the kinks out of my gear and my body,” he said. “We planned for the second half of May because there was no chance of rain. Heat was not on my radar. I had never in my wildest dreams expected this.”

Once the temperature dropped and Lee’s body got used to walking more than a dozen miles a day, he began to get into a groove. He kept on trucking even if meant often staring down a flat patch of road that stretched for miles and served as a visual reminder of how many more steps were left in the day.

“It’s amazing when you think

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Hike

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about it and how fast car goes from point A to point B. It takes you less than three minutes," he said. "When you walk that three miles, it's an hour, and when it's in the hot blazing heat it is unbearable. You get a quite different mentality and how important times is to you."

On his May 21 birthday trek from Lathrop to Tracy, his sister Joanne joined him. Along the path his wife left a surprise message: "Hi Russell" in the dirt and a sign along on a fence. On a day off in Tracy, she arranged for him to get a massage.

The couple's teenage sons, Cameron and Joss, joined their dad on May 23 for a 12-mile journey through the chilly and windy Altamont Pass under the backdrop of 6,000 windmills. Gail Lee joined her husband on his Memorial Day pass through Pleasonton and Fremont.

He found he enjoyed the solitude. Lee's long walk ended with a trip across Cupertino's new Mary Avenue bicycle and pedestrian bridge, which was built as a symbol for encouraging alternative modes of transportation.

"It was terrific. It was everything I hoped it would be and more," he said of the trip.

To read about Lee's walk in more detail, visit his web diary at the Lee family website: www.worldtrippers.com.

There and back again...

- May 15: Drive to home in Gold Country
- May 16: Walk to Mokelumne Hill - 9.25 miles
- May 17: Walk to Valley Springs - 13.23 miles
- May 18: Walk to Lockeford - 21.05 miles
- May 19: Walk to Stockton - 15.25 miles
- May 20: Walk to Lathrop - 14.3 miles
- May 21: Walk to Tracy - 12.08 miles
- May 22: Rest in Tracy
- May 23: Walk to Livermore - 15.34 miles
- May 24: Walk to Pleasonton - 15.12 miles
- May 25: Walk to Fremont - 15.88 miles
- May 26: Walk to Milpitas - 12.61 miles
- May 27: Walk to Cupertino - 16.07 miles

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* source: National Newspaper Association 2008 survey

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More than 30 prizes worth over \$20,000 will be awarded, see all the prizes at: www.siliconvalleyduckrace.org

- WHEN:** Sunday, June 21, 2009
WHERE: Vasona Lake Park
333 Blossom Hill Road, Los Gatos, CA 95032
RACE DAY SCHEDULE: 10:00 AM: Festival, Food and Games
1:30 PM: 15,000 rubber ducks race into Vasona Lake
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