

Temescal News & Views

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Temescal News & Views is published bimonthly and distributed to 3,000 households, schools and businesses.



Our Mission

The mission of TNT is to enhance the quality of life in our diverse community through revitalization of our homes, businesses, schools and public services by providing an ongoing forum for community education, interaction and empowerment.



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Green Panthers Transform Neglected Field into Public Garden

A notable transformation has taken place on the fenced-in lot at the corner of 51st and Telegraph. Through the work of a hardy handful of volunteers, what was once an abandoned field of rubble and trash is slowly developing into a garden park. Over the past several months, members of the community volunteer group Green Panthers have met twice a month to work on the site, weeding, watering, hauling out trash, and spreading donated mulch around the garden.

The park's latest addition is a garden labyrinth. Marked in the center by a large rock, the labyrinth is based on a classic seven circuit pattern and is located in the eastern side of the lot, along 51st St. The labyrinth was first drawn out on the ground, and over time volunteers have placed rocks gathered from the site onto the lines, creating the soothing and steady pattern of the labyrinth.

Although labyrinths have been around since ancient times, they are enjoying newfound popularity today because of their meditative qualities. Walking the labyrinth, which meanders but always leads to the center, is thought to utilize both halves of the brain, bringing about mental clarity and calm. For most children, however, the mazelike paths are simply an invitation to run along the winding lanes.

We are particularly happy that this garden element has emerged from the simple rearrangement of rubble from the site. Like the park itself, this feature will evolve over time with the support of neighborhood volunteers. We invite anyone to bring rocks for the borders, to walk (or run!) the labyrinth, and to support the development of this once derelict site into an enjoyable spot for our Temescal neighborhood.

— Julie Min

City of Oakland Proposal Trades Left Turn Lanes for Bike Lanes on Telegraph Ave.

On December 4 a large group of bicycle advocates, some from as far away as Pittsburg, met with concerned Temescal and Rockridge residents at Faith United Presbyterian Church to hear the City of Oakland's plan to remove 34 left turn lanes from a two and a half mile stretch of Telegraph Avenue in order to implement the Telegraph Avenue Bicycle



Local children enjoy the new Labyrinth at 51st and Telegraph.
Photo: Cappy Coates

Lane Proposal. The proposal calls for restriping Telegraph from Aileen St. (north of 55th St.) to 16th St. in downtown Oakland in order to remove designated left turn lanes and add intermittent bicycle lanes.

Under the plan on display at the meeting, left turn lanes would be removed from 55th, 49th, 48th, 47th, 43rd, 42nd, 41st, and 39th Streets, in addition to most streets below MacArthur Blvd., except for crossings at large thoroughfares like 27th St. and W. Grand. Left turn lanes would thus be removed from ten of 24 signalized intersections and from 24 of 28 non-signalized intersections, according to the City's consultant, James M. Daisa of Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Participants in the meeting had a chance to voice their support for or opposition to the proposal and to have their oral and written comments preserved in permanent fashion, to be published later. Those in favor of restriping spoke of a dangerous Telegraph Avenue without bicycle lanes and environmental enhancements from encouraging bicycle ridership. Those against restriping spoke of a dangerous Telegraph Avenue without left turn lanes, and environmental damage caused by idling cars backed up behind left turning automobiles stopped in through lanes. Audience members also peppered Mr. Daisa and City of Oakland Department of Public Works Transportation Services Manager, Wlad Wlassowsky, with questions over the controversial plan.

A Kimley-Horn draft report available at the meeting entitled "Environmental Review of the

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Proposed Restriping of Telegraph Avenue to Accommodate Bike Lanes” can be found at www.oaklandpw.com (click on “Bicycling”). The review presents current traffic conditions on Telegraph, indicating, for example, that “[b]icycle travel along Telegraph Avenue is concentrated around the

Thank You From Temescal News and Views

In addition to the local merchants who sponsor every issue of Temescal News and Views (whose names appear on the front cover), the newsletter relies on the contributions of local residents. The following neighbors made donations to TNV during 2003. We thank you all for your generosity.

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MacArthur BART station, especially during the morning commute peak” (p. 14.), and that Telegraph Avenue is substantially safer than comparable streets in Alameda County (p. 27). Portions of the review inspired criticism, however, such as the method of counting bicycle riders on Telegraph and the failure to include comparative counts of bicycle riders on the parallel Webster St.

The proposal has been in the works for four to five years, but has been slowed because it is currently under Alameda County Superior Court Judge Richard Hodge’s January 2001 order to conduct an environmental impact review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). According to Judge Hodge, “Removal of automobile lanes to install bicycle lanes may have a significant effect on the environment.” The City had previously claimed that the project was exempt from CEQA review. The original funding from Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) was lost in part for lack of environmental impact information, according to a letter from BAAQMD to the City of Oakland dated March 3, 2000. The source of the present funding of \$200,000 is Alameda County Measure B’s 20 year sales tax extension for transportation projects passed by voters in November 2000, according to Mr. Wlassowsky.

Mr. Daisa explained that under CEQA, the City must hold public meetings, take and respond to public comments and questions, conduct studies, provide reports, and, in general, engage in a transparent process. The December 4 meeting is the first of several. Changes to the proposal may occur as a result of public input. The next meeting on the proposal is planned for late February 2004. Following CEQA review, the proposal, whatever its final form, will ultimately go to the City Council.

To submit written comments or questions, which, according to Mr. Daisa, will be preserved, published, and responded to, e-mail BikePed@oaklandnet.com, fax 238-6412, or mail:

Attn: Telegraph Bike Lane Project
 City of Oakland Public Works Agency
 Transportation Services Division
 250 Ogawa Plaza, Suite 4344
 Oakland, CA 94612

— *Jacqueline Hoepfner-Freitas,*
DMV Neighbors Association Chair

Friends of Temescal Creek Seeks Grant Writer

Friends of Temescal Creek, our local creek’s watershed organization, is growing and looking for help. We need a “Watershed Coordinator”—someone to keep folks updated, be a contact for volunteers, keep records and look for funding. Help is needed writing grants to get funding to pay a Watershed Coordinator. This work could expose someone to many other environmental career opportunities. If you are interested, contact us at FoTemescal@sbcglobal.net, or 434-3840, at the Merritt College Watershed Center. We encourage everyone to join our listserve at FriendsOfTemescalCreek-subscribe@yahoo.com.

We are also monitoring Temescal Creek’s water quality, as it affects the play areas in the new Greenbelt. Contact Joanmarie Wood at joanmariew@earthlink.net about volunteering for this easy activity.

— *Bruce Douglas*

Get To Know Peralta Elementary School

Considering your options for Kindergarten in Fall 2004? Peralta Elementary is a small Oakland public school located at 460 63rd St. in North Oakland. Peralta has dedicated teachers, an active parent community, strong academic instruction, and vibrant programs in art, music & gardening. Come visit us and find out more about our unique school!

A Kindergarten Open House will be held at the school on Thursday, January 29 at 6:45 PM. Meet our principal & kindergarten teachers and find out more about Peralta’s instructional programs. To reserve childcare during the open house, call 655-2737. Also, school tours are available on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Call the school office at 879-1450 to schedule a tour date. For more information, call 655-2737 or check out our website at www.geocities.com/peraltaschool.

— *Susan Killebrew*

Temescal Website in the Works

We are trying to develop a community website to promote interest in Temescal and create a strong advocacy group that can help to guide future improvements and initiatives in the Temescal neighborhood. We are

looking for any individuals with Web expertise. Rockridge has a wonderful comprehensive Website, we should have the same. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Chris Pew at 547-1582 or by e-mail at Edgarchris@earthlink.net.

Keep up to date on Temescal happenings by subscribing to our e-mail list, Temescal Families. Subscribe via the web at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/temescalfamilies>. Or, send an e-mail to temescalfamilies-subscribe@yahoogroups.com with any subject—you will automatically be put on the list.

— Chris Pew

Bring your Valentine to the Temescal Creek Clean Up

Join with neighbors in a volunteer effort to clean up litter and weeds along Temescal Creek from Redondo to Clifton on Saturday, February 14. We'll meet at 9 AM next to Temescal Creek in the DMV parking lot (at Claremont and Cavour) and work until noon. Coffee and morning snacks will be provided by the DMV Neighbors Association. The City of Oakland Public Works Environmental Services Division will loan us tools for the clean up. They supply gloves, garbage bags, and loppers, rakes, hoes, brooms, and litter pickup sticks. Or bring your own favorite tools, well marked with your name. We can always use wheelbarrows. The Temescal Tool Lending Library has great weed pullers for really big weeds. We'll check out several and have them on hand to give demonstrations. By Valentine's Day there should be lots of big green weeds to pull. Let's get rid of them on February 14th before they get away from us!

Wear boots or shoes that you don't mind getting wet since it's very likely that the creek bed will be wet. Rain cancels but heavy fog does not. Some of our best winter clean ups have been on gray days. This event is sponsored by the DMV Neighbors Association and the City of Oakland Environmental Services Division. Questions? Call Margaret at 655-1767.

— Margaret Pinter

Kindergarten Orientation at Emerson Elementary

Would you like your child to attend your neighborhood elementary school? Emerson Elementary invites Temescal parents of young children to check out our excellent

kindergarten program at Kindergarten Orientation, Wednesday, January 7 at 6 PM. Talk with the kindergarten teachers and Principal Caroline Yee, and find out more about the school in general. The evening will be kicked off with a special tree dedication by School Board Member Kerry Hamill. The school is located at 4803 Lawton Ave. Call 879-1150 for more information.

— Caroline Yee

Library Closed Extra Days Each Month Due to Budget Cuts

You may have come by the library recently and been surprised to see the "Closed" sign on a day that was not a holiday. As part of budget reductions in the city of Oakland, libraries, recreation centers, city offices and other facilities are being shut down at least one extra day per month in addition to the regular holidays. Future dates are January 2nd, January 16th, and February 13th.

For African American History Month in February, our children's librarian Joy is arranging to have a storyteller come to the library. We don't have all the details yet, but give us a call in January at 597-5049 or stop by to get the time and date.

We are adding some classic feature films to our video collection in addition to our home improvement and jazz documentary films. We will also be purchasing new CDs by the end of December, so you can look for those on our shelves by early February.

The Tool Library is working in partnership with the Red Cross on earthquake preparedness. They have put together a small toolbox to loan out to patrons to use for securing furniture, bookcases and the like. The Red Cross will also present a number of short classes at which every patron will be given a bag of "goodies" such as Velcro straps, tape, angle brackets and other small hardware to secure items inside the house. Check with Ty in the Tool Library at 597-5089 for class dates.

— Sally Bean, Branch Manager

Swim With Temescal Aquatic Masters

Temescal Aquatic Masters is a local masters swim team that practices daily at the Temescal Pool on 45th St. at Lawton. We have morning practices for early types and evening practices for late types, as well as weekend

morning practices. Temescal Aquatic Masters caters to all levels of swimmers and has an excellent coaching staff to help you develop and continue to grow your stroke. Our team is diverse in ages and abilities and has many wonderful members who you can get to know at our social functions. The workouts are varied and encourage you to increase your skill level as the swimmers are divided into lanes with other swimmers of like speed and ability.

We encourage everyone to come try our team free of charge for your first swim. If you like the team, the cost is \$35.00 a month for as many sessions as you can participate in or just \$20.00 for a 5 swim pass book to be used as you wish. There are men's and women's locker rooms for changing, hot showers, safe places to leave your personal belongings and easy parking on the street.

We are always looking for and welcome new members. Morning swims are from 5:45 - 6:45 AM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Evening sessions run from 7-8 PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Weekend swims are from 8:45 - 10:15 AM on Saturday and Sunday.

Please visit our web site at www.temescalmasters.org for more information.

— Beth Cohen

What is the Temescal NCPD?

Community policing in Oakland depends on input from 50 Neighborhood Crime

Get Drunk on Poetry at the Poetry Saloon

This informal poetry reading group meets the second Friday of each month, 7:30 PM at 472 44th Street (between Telegraph and Webster) in Temescal. Upcoming dates are January 9th and February 13th. The event is conceived, hosted, and inspired by Gail Ford.

Bring a couple of your own poems and a couple by someone else to read—or come just to enjoy. Dessert, finger food, coffee, and tea are provided. Phone Clive at 654-6495 or Gail at 594-2200 with any questions. Hope to see you there!

— Clive Matson

Temescal Calendar

Saturday, January 3, 9 AM. Green Panthers planning meeting. Meet at Temescal Cafe. 658-2488.

Tuesday, January 6, 6:30 PM. NCPC Crime Abatement Committee meeting. Everyone welcome. Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th and Webster. 652-4507.

Wednesday, January 7, 6 PM. Emerson Elementary School Kindergarden Orientation. 4803 Lawton Ave. 879-1150.

Friday, January 9, 7:30 PM. Poetry Saloon. Bring a poem that you have written and one by someone else to share, or just come to enjoy. 472 44th Street (between Telegraph and Webster). 594-2200.

Wednesday, January 14, 6-7:30 PM. Temescal Merchants Association monthly meeting. All are welcome. Temescal Library, 5202 Telegraph. 653-7196.

Wednesday, January 21, 6:30 PM. City of Oakland Redevelopment Agency Community Workshop on MacArthur BART improvements. Call 637-0247 for location information.

Wednesday, January 21, 7 PM. Temescal Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) Steering Committee meeting. Everyone welcome. Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th and Webster. 420-6974.

Thursday, January 29, 6:45 PM. Peralta Elementary School Kindergarden Open House. 460 63rd St. 655-2737.

Saturday, January 24, 9 AM. Green Panthers beautification activity. All gardeners welcome! Meet at Temescal Cafe. 658-2488.

Tuesday, February 3, 6:30 PM. NCPC Crime Abatement Committee meeting. Everyone welcome. Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th and Webster. 652-4507.

Saturday, February 7, 9 AM. Green Panthers planning meeting. Meet at Temescal Cafe. 658-2488.

Saturday, February 7, 10 AM. Councilmember Jane Brunner's Community Advisory meeting. The topic is the March Ballot, with presentations and discussions on upcoming ballot issues. Peralta Elementary School, 460 63rd St. 238-7001.

Wednesday, February 11, 6-7:30 PM. Temescal Merchants Association monthly meeting. All are welcome. Temescal Library, 5202 Telegraph. 653-7196.

Saturday, February 14, 9 - NOON. DMV Neighbors Volunteer Creek Cleanup. Temescal Creek, near Claremont and Cavour. 655-1767.

Wednesday, February 18, 7 PM. Temescal Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) Steering Committee meeting. Everyone welcome. Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th St. and Webster. 420-6974.

Friday, February 13, 7:30 PM. Poetry Saloon. Bring a poem that you have written and one by someone else to share, or just come to enjoy. 472 44th Street (between Telegraph and Webster). 594-2200.

Saturday, February 28, 9 AM. Green Panthers beautification activity. All gardeners welcome! Meet at Temescal Cafe. 655-8855.

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Prevention Council beats across Oakland, each representing about 5000 residents. The Temescal Beat, 12X, is well-organized, thanks in large part to the legacy of neighborhood activists such as Bill Peterson, Cathy Steirn, Laura Jackson and Buck King. Through the years they and many others have identified local problems that need attention from the Police Department and other city departments. Residents of Beat 12X are the eyes and ears of Temescal. Bring your concerns in person to the Steering Committee meetings or by phone to any Steering Committee member. Each month the NCPC Steering Committee takes the reported concerns and meets with Yeda Altes, the Oakland Police Department Neighborhood Services Coordinator for North Oakland, to identify three problems in Temescal for the police to focus on in the coming month. Yeda also reports back on police efforts and any success stories from the previous month. All this information gets passed to Lt. Lawrence Green, the Area Commander for North Oakland, who assigns police resources to our problem areas.

We elect officers each year at our Spring Community Meeting. Be on the lookout for flyers to every home and apartment in the area announcing this event. In the meantime, please bring your concerns and issues to our monthly meetings. The Steering Committee meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 7 PM in Faith Presbyterian Church (49th & Webster). Call Don Lowrey at 420-6974 to get on the agenda. The Crime Abatement Committee meets at the same location on the first Tuesday of the month. Call Bill Peterson for details at 652-4507. The Blight & Beautification Committee (Green Panthers) meets at the Temescal Cafe. Call Buck King at 655-8855 for information.

May 2004 bring us even safer, more

peaceful streets in Temescal and throughout Oakland.

— Donald Lowrey, Temescal NCPC Chair

Temescal Spotlight

This month, a contribution from local poet Clive Matson.

STILL TRUE

Yesterday I dreamt the sky
turned orange and white,
spawning giant mushrooms.
I jumped into a ditch.
Held my head in my hands
for a few seconds until
everything went.

Today the western hills
are hazy green and brown.
I have things to do.
People wander in and out
of shops. Sun shines on
the shimmering road as if
nothing happened.

Clive Matson (MFA Columbia University) has published poetry since 1964. He says the most interesting thing he's done lately is co-edit (with Allen Cohen) the anthology of 9/11 poems An Eye For An Eye Makes The Whole World Blind (Regent Press, Oakland, 2002), which won the 2003 PEN Oakland Josephine Miles National Literary Award. He has taught more than 2,000 writing workshops nationwide and his instructional text Let The Crazy Child Write! (New World Library, 1998) is being used by groups around the world. Matson lives in Temescal with his wife, poet Gail Ford, and their six-year-old son Ezra. Visit him at www.matson-ford.com.

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