

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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Carter Middle School to Close

Due to declining enrollment and academic underperformance, next year will be the last for Temescal's Carter Middle School (Webster at 45th). Officially, Carter is "being considered for closure," but as part of a widespread consolidation of Oakland schools orchestrated by State Administrator Randolph Ward, the district plan calls for Carter to be reduced to 8th grade only in the 2005-6 school year, and to close altogether at the end of that year.

Letters notifying parents of children who would have attended Carter next year were mailed in mid-December. Carter's enrollment has fallen 30% in the past five years with the district citing declining African American enrollment as a key factor behind closures. Additionally, according to State of California figures, 97% of Carter's 8th graders' math and reading skills were below grade level.

What to do with the Carter site remains undecided, but all Oakland schools shuttered in the recent round of closures have been "reutilized" as offices or as sites for new schools. According to Hee Won Wang, Program Associate at Bay Area Coalition of Equitable Schools (BACES), "they're not being sold or boarded up."

The school district's plans for the North Oakland community include creating Sankofa Academy, a new K-8 facility on the Washington School site (61st and Shattuck). (Sankofa is an Akan word meaning "we must return and reclaim our past so we can move forward, and so we understand why and how we came to be who we are today.") Additionally, the district intends to partner with UC Berkeley and Aspire, a nonprofit charter school management organization already operating several Oakland schools, to transform Golden Gate Elementary (63rd and San Pablo) into a K-12 school.

But many parents and teachers across the district continue to decry the school closure moves as anti-democratic because of the reduction of the school board to an advisory capacity, and as part of a national movement to privatize education through charter schools. OUSD School board member Dan Siegel asserts that the closures are part of a "privatization effort that doesn't work

for kids in part because of an obvious motivation to spend less money on their education."

Verdeser Carter Middle School, named for the community activist and former principal of Castlemont High School, serves a section of North Oakland bordered (roughly, triangularly) by 51st and Broadway in the northeast, MacArthur and Adeline in the southwest, and San Pablo and Alcatraz in the Northwest. — Dominick Tracy

Temescal Families Beautify 40th Street

On November 6, the TemescalFamilies group planted trees, bulbs and shrubs on the 40th Street medians between Telegraph and Webster. A local landscape architect developed a plan with attractive and hearty plants and trees, and the City of Oakland generously provided trees, shrubs and bulbs. A fun group of neighbors pitched in on the effort by planting and making donations that went to more shrubs and refreshments for the workers. Other neighbors got tools from our local tool library and worked all day, sharing great conversation and terrific ideas.

This is just the beginning of the transformation of 40th street, as local business owners and developers have agreed to do further landscape work on the medians. TemescalFamilies will also be planning more plantings and working to be part of future city programs. Thank you to all the great neighbors who showed up to make our neighborhood more beautiful.

For more information or to join our group, e-mail Temescalfamilies@yahoo.com. The group runs a web-based Temescal neighborhood bulletin board promoting neighborhood events and sharing information about the community.

— Chris Pew

Temescal Arts Center – High Art in a Low-key Building

Perhaps while walking by the recently opened Lanesplitter Pizza & Pub and the lofty new Temescal Place on Telegraph and 48th Street, you've noticed the barn-like structure down 48th Street with the dance and yoga fliers stapled to the front. Ever wondered what's going on in there? *There* is the Temescal Arts Center, a performing-

arts cooperative that has been providing dance, movement, and yoga classes for more than eight years.

With an experimental and post-modern emphasis, the center hosts renowned instructors in dance and body awareness. Three of the disciplines taught at the Arts Center are fascinating art forms with rich modern-dance histories: 1) Action Theater involves movement and vocalization in a type of "landscape of dreams;" 2) Contact Improvisation is often danced as a duet involving physical contact, with dancers rolling, springing, and falling while supporting one another's movements; 3) Butoh is a highly experimental dance form originally performed in post-WWII Japan that combines dance, theater, and improvisation. With roots in Japanese and German Expressionist dance, Butoh has evolved into an international dance form.

The Temescal Arts Center is also one of the oldest yoga studios in North Oakland, and offers classes in Pilates, alignment, and body-awareness techniques. The center is available to rent for performances and has hosted music and film programs as well. Upcoming performances in January and February will include Butoh improvisations and a Temescal Arts Salon, featuring members of the cooperative. For more information, to have a calendar mailed to you, or to inquire about renting the center, call 923-1074. The Temescal Arts Center is located at 511 48th Street (at Telegraph).

– Lisa McElroy

Temescal Masters Helps Keep New Years Resolutions

Temescal Aquatic Masters is the local masters swim team that caters to all levels of swimmers and has an excellent coaching

staff to help you develop and continue to grow your stroke. We work out daily at the newly refurbished Temescal Pool on 45th Street at Lawton with morning practices for early-riser types and evening practices for later types. We also run weekend morning practices. Our team is diverse in ages and abilities and has many wonderful members with whom you can mingle at our social functions. The workouts are varied and encourage you to increase your skill level since swimmers are divided into lanes with others of like speed and ability.

We encourage everyone to come try our team free of charge the first time. After that, fees are \$40 a month for as many swims as you can participate in or just \$25 for a 5 swim pass 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 45th Street. We always welcome new members, so please stop by the pool and swim with us. You'll soon be addicted.

Morning swims are on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 6:00 - 7:00 AM and Saturdays and Sundays from 8:45 - 10:15 AM. Evening swims take place Monday through Thursday from 7 - 8 PM. For more information, see our website at www.temescalmasters.org. – Beth Cohen

Frog Park Phase II Fundraiser

One of the jewels of the Rockridge-Temescal neighborhood is the Greenbelt that runs alongside Temescal Creek between Clarke and Hudson Streets. With its trees, native plantings, and gurgling creek, the walkway allows a peaceful stroll linking two attractive and much enjoyed children's playgrounds, collectively known as Frog Park.

When the entire project was created in 2001, more than 1600 volunteers from the community helped plan and build the playground structures. Now the Friends of the Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt (FROG) are attempting to raise \$25,000 to complete Phase II of the project for 2005. The walkway would see such updates as more native plantings and a butterfly garden. Hardy Park (at Hardy and Claremont) would gain swings, upgraded basketball courts and

hoops, picnic tables, and a drinking fountain, among other embellishments.

FROG also needs volunteers to help with planting or monitoring the project. If you would like to make a donation, forms are available at the kiosks at Redondo and Hardy Parks. Checks, made payable to "RCPC/FROGPark," can be sent to 5245 College Ave., PMB 311, Oakland, CA 96418, or go to www.frogpark.org. For more information, call 644-4228. – Lisa McElroy

Temescal Library News

Once again we want to thank Oakland voters for passing Measure Q (a parcel tax for the library) in March 2004! Now, as you check out new books, CDs, DVDs and videos from the library, you will notice a yellow sticker: "Funded by Measure Q." Thanks to this initiative we have been able to expand hours at all the branches as well as add to our collections.

As part of African American History Month, our children's librarian Joy has arranged for storyteller and performer Jamie Myrick to portray Harriet Tubman in a program at the library on Thursday, February 24 at 1:00 PM. And don't forget our weekly Preschool Storytime every Wednesday at 10:30 AM for kids ages 2-5. Joy will be gone for several days in January to attend the American Library Association Midwinter Conference in Boston. She is a member of the prestigious Sibert Award Committee of the ALA, which selects an outstanding non-fiction children's book each year.

Although it doesn't seem possible in such a small space, the Tool Library keeps growing...and getting more popular. Ty, the tool lending librarian, has added some new tools such as a 10½ inch circular saw for heavy duty cutting, an impact wrench, and laser levels. He's also acquired duplicates of some very popular tools such as a drain snake for outside sewer lines, a planer, Sawzalls, and roof jacks. The staff works hard to keep things in order, but the downstairs quarters are crowded and Ty is working on a plan to install a more efficient counter and to better organize the space. See you in the library!

– Sally Bean, Branch Manager

Kittens Still Need Homes

Four kittens rescued at 47th and Shattuck are still looking for permanent homes. If you are interested in adopting one of these sweet babies, please contact Heather at hanly@sbcglobal.net.

Friends of Temescal Creek Receives Grant

FoTC, a citizens' group working to enhance Temescal Creek as a recreational and wild-life corridor within the urban landscape, recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Richmond-based nonprofit, The Watershed Project. The grant will boost outreach efforts for FoTC's water-quality monitoring program over the next half year.

Active since 2002, the monitoring team takes samples at sites where the mostly buried creek is accessible above ground, including at Temescal Lake, Frog Park, St. Albert's and Shellmound Park. Current monitoring includes both chemical and bacteriological testing. In spring of 2003, volunteers found high levels of E. coli bacteria in the creek above Lake Temescal, leading the city to locate and repair four sewer leaks. Current samples contain E. coli counts typical for an urban creek (at or below 2000 ppm). Don't drink the water from the creek, and wash your hands before eating and after playing.

FoTC needs help in expanding its monitoring efforts. Volunteer monitoring is a fun way to learn about the creek, raise creek awareness in the community, and provide scientific data to regional water-quality projects. If you'd like to help, contact Joan Marie Wood at 653-4576.

FoTC is also a cosponsor of *Conversations about Watersheds*, a conference on volunteer stewardship to be held January 13 - 16 at Merritt College. For more information, visit mountaincurrent.net/ebwc or call the East Bay Watershed Center at 434-3840.

– Carla Koop

Neighborhood in a Jam: Temescal Amity Works Update

Citrus season has arrived and many Temescal yards are full of oranges, lemons and grapefruit. If your trees are bearing more fruit than you can handle, you might want to consider taking part in the Temescal Amity Works' winter neighborhood marmalade project. We will be making "neighborhood marmalade" in January and we will come pick or pick up surplus citrus, all of which will be given back to

donors and neighbors as a part of an ongoing community project.

Temescal Amity Works was started by Susanne Cockrell and Ted Purves to facilitate and document the exchange of backyard produce, conversation, and collective biography within Temescal. Over the next year, we are maintaining a storefront-studio just off Telegraph at 49th Street (482 D 49th Street) and a crop-sharing program called *The Big Backyard*. During January, Amity Works is open Thursday-Saturday, 10 AM - 1 PM. Please stop in, visit our reading room, have a glass of fresh juice, and take home some fruit harvested from neighborhood trees.

If you would like to participate in the produce sharing or have any other questions about the project, flag us down when you see our cart rolling through the neighborhood or visit our website: www.amityworks.org. You can email us at bigbackyard@amityworks.org.

– Susanne Cockrell and Ted Purves

Education Not Incarceration

With the latest round of school closures proposed by State Administrator Randolph Ward including perhaps Carter Middle School, Education Not Incarceration activists continue the local fight to close prisons, not schools. Building on the momentum from the May 2004 speak-out at Oakland Tech High School, Education Not Incarceration has spawned a number of organizing projects and committed to supporting student and community action in 2005 to make that happen. ENI activists rallied against Administrator Ward's plan at the School Board meeting at Oakland Tech December 15th, and have endorsed the call for a march against school closures on January 17th. The march begins at Frank Ogawa Plaza (City Hall) at 11 AM.

ENI's teacher working group meets monthly to develop curriculum that addresses the root causes of violence and examines peacemaking alternatives that restore justice and do not depend on the police, detention, and incarceration. ENI's local campaign work includes work with the Oakland Coalition of Congregations to

draft legislation to stop re-incarcerating parolees on technical violations and to retain talented staff in Oakland schools.

Education Not Incarceration meets the second and fourth Mondays of every month at the Niebyl Proctor Library, 6501 Telegraph, near Alcatraz. For more information, check www.ednotinc.org.

– Aaron Shuman

Last Chance to Take a Studio One Class Before Building Renovation

Before the 57th year of public service from this City of Oakland Parks and Recreation facility located at 365 45th street is interrupted, you still have a chance to join Studio One's winter session. This final session before the projected two year renovation runs from January 10 to February 19. A variety of classes are being offered, such as Artistic Remodeling Plans, Scenes in A Box (for adults), Double and Decorative Matting of Flat Art, Creative Inquiry, Imagery Dreams and Rituals, Cookies & Knitting (for teens), and Oakland Teen Theater Acting Workshop. Photography, fitness, glass, ceramics, and jewelry classes are also available. All of the 53 classes and labs are taught by extraordinary teaching artists.

The public will be informed of the relocation of Studio One's art and fitness classes when the space(s) have been confirmed by City of Oakland officials. But don't wait - call us at 597-5027 to register for classes today!

– Tomye Gouache

Temescal Creek Cleanup

The DMV Neighbors Association and the City of Oakland Environmental Services Division are co-sponsoring a neighborhood cleanup of Temescal Creek on Saturday, January 15 from 9:00 AM to noon. Meet at Temescal Creek where it runs through the DMV parking lot (at Claremont and Cavour). The city will supply gloves, garbage bags, tools (loppers, rakes, hoes, brooms, litter pick-up sticks, etc.). Please join us: the creek always looks so much better after our morning "yard" work. Call Margaret with any questions at 655-1767.

– Margaret Pinter

Temescal Calendar

Wednesdays, Ongoing, 10:30 AM. Preschool storytime for children ages 2-5. Temescal Library, 5205 Telegraph. 597-5049.

Wednesday, January 12, 6-7:30 PM. Temescal Merchants Association monthly meeting. All are welcome. Temescal Library, 5205 Telegraph. 653-7196.

Thursday - Saturday, January 13-15. *Conversations about Watersheds*, a conference on volunteer stewardship endorsed by Friends of Temescal Creek. Merritt College, 12500 Campus Drive. 434-3840.

Friday, January 14, 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, January 15, 9 AM. Temescal Creek Cleanup. Meet at Temescal Creek where it runs through the DMV parking lot (at Claremont and Cavour). 655-1767.

Monday, January 17, 11 AM. March to protest the closing of local schools, sponsored by Education Not Incarceration. Frank Ogawa Plaza (City Hall), between 14th and 15th Streets at Clay. www.ednotinc.org.

Wednesday, January 19, 7 PM. Temescal Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) Steering Committee meeting. Everyone welcome. Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th and Webster. 420-6974.

Saturday, January 29, 9 AM. Green Panthers beautification activity. All gardeners welcome! Meet at the dog park on the corner of Telegraph and 51st. 655-8855.

Saturday, February 5, 9 AM. Green Panthers beautification activity. All gardeners welcome! Meet at the dog park on the corner of Telegraph and 51st. 655-8855.

Saturday, February 5, 10 AM. Councilmember Jane Brunner hosts a community advisory meeting. This month's topic is *Public Safety in North Oakland*. Peralta Elementary School, 460 63rd Street (parking on Alcatraz, just east of Telegraph).

Wednesday, February 9, 6-7:30 PM. Temescal Merchants Association monthly meeting. All are welcome. Temescal Library, 5205 Telegraph. 653-7196.

Friday, February 11, 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, February 16, 7 PM. Temescal Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) Steering Committee meeting. Everyone welcome. Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th St. and Webster. 420-6974.

Thursday, February 24, 1 PM. Storyteller and performer Jamie Myrick portrays Harriet Tubman in a program for children. Temescal Library, 5205 Telegraph. 597-5049.

Saturday, February 26, 9 AM. Green Panthers beautification activity. All gardeners welcome! Meet at the dog park on the corner of Telegraph and 51st. 655-8855.

Temescal Arts Center Offers Somatics Series

Each Saturday morning finds a group of students learning a new way to inhabit their bodies. What does that mean? There are a lot of ways to answer that question, and the Somatics Series is like a sampler platter for anybody with a body to explore. With a new teacher and a new somatic discipline each month, students are invited to explore a variety of mind-body practices.

“Soma” means *body*. In the most basic sense, somatics is any mind-body integrating practice. Generally disciplines deal with breath, body alignment and dynamic interplay between mind, body, and spirit. Practitioners approach the work from any of those avenues. Physical goals might include movement efficiency, ease, or healing an injury. One can also enter somatic work with emotional or spiritual goals.

January’s class, Creative Body Alignment through Ideokinesis, is taught by dance teacher, dancer, choreographer, certified Pilates instructor, and director of Berkeley Moving Arts Ruth Botchan. Botchan will teach balanced alignment and ease of motion, as developed by Mabel Elsworth Todd, and how to use your creative mind to re-educate neuromuscular patterns. Students of ideokinesis experience improved body balance and physical ease in motion.

February offers Feldenkrais, a way to access the nervous system’s own innate processes to change and refine functioning, with Berkeley practioner Ernie Adams.

Classes are held each Saturday morning at the Temescal Arts Center from 10:45 AM - 12:45 PM. Drop-in rates are \$20 per class, and students who sign up for an entire series are offered the fourth class free. Visit www.somaticseries.org for complete de-

tails, and enjoy! See what your own body has in store. *— Rebecca Graham*

Temescal NCPC News

The Crime Abatement Committee, previously chaired by Bill Peterson, will no longer meet (see following note). If you have a particular crime issue please bring it to our Steering Committee meeting, which meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 7 PM at Faith Presbyterian Church (49th and Webster).

Bill Peterson, an active NCPC member and chair of the Crime Abatement Committee, suffered a stroke in October, which paralyzed his right side and left him unable to speak. However, he is very alert and able to watch the Raiders and Warriors on television. And he certainly appreciates visits from his many Temescal friends. Please visit him at the Oakland Care Center, 3030 Webster Street, across from Summit Medical Center. Street parking there is very easy after 5:30 PM.

Car break-ins and street assaults are a problem in Temescal’s Beat 12X. Here are a few tips to prevent them:

AUTOS – Don’t leave anything visible that a thief might want – even spare change. CDs, tapes, anything that a drug addict might smash and grab to sell for a quick drug buy is fair game. Install The Club or other protective devices. Better yet... install a device that locks your ignition.

WALKING – Walk in well-lighted areas, whenever possible. Walk with others. Women with backpack purses might want to carry them over one shoulder. This prevents thieves from pulling victims from behind.

— Don Lowery, NCPC Chair

Help Support This Newsletter and TNT. Volunteers are doing the work of getting out this newsletter (and occasional fliers)—but we still need to pay the printer! If you value our community efforts, please consider making a donation. Any amount will help. Make your check payable to TNT, and send it with this form to: TNT, c/o 469 Rich St., Oakland, CA 94609. *— Thank You!*

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I'd like to volunteer. Please call me.