

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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Temescal Commons – Community from the Inside Out

Pear trees flourish on the sidewalk in front of Temescal Commons Cohousing (TCC) on 42nd Street, a thriving 26-member community that literally sprawls out into the neighborhood. It's hard to believe that this lively cohousing community was just an idea nine years ago, when schoolteacher Tom Prince and some other members of Rockridge United Methodist Church (RUMC) began talking about living together near their church. The group bought an 11,300-square-foot lot located just east of Telegraph Avenue in 1997, with the idea of creating an intentional community. Construction was completed in 2000, and Temescal Commons Cohousing (TCC) is now an established community made up of nine buildings set around two well-used lawn areas, a sandbox and basketball hoop for kids, and a raised-bed vegetable garden that faces onto the street.

A common house provides a place for the 26 members to share twice-weekly collective meals, attend bimonthly community meetings, do laundry, or just chat. It's sandwiched between the original 1880s building that faces the street and a beautiful old carriage house whose top level was recently converted into a weight room for resident teens (but where pieces of 100-year-old hay still collect in the dusty corners). Teens also make use of a shared tool room, which during my visit in July was strewn with their handiwork—a pile of colorful airbrushed T-shirts and a pair of white sneakers decorated with the Oakland Tech bulldog mascot.

Temescal Commons is a shared intergenerational community made up of four families with kids, two newly married couples, and five single individuals. It's also a group that tries to put into practice principles derived from their faith, including environmental stewardship, social justice, and neighborhood improvement. The TCC brochure provides a list of the community's eco-friendly design features, including smaller house sizes, elements that keep houses cool in summer and warm in the winter, use of sustainably harvested wood, framing that reduces lumber use, cellulose insulation that insulates 30% better than fiberglass, on-demand water heaters, and solar electric roofs on all new buildings. The combined benefit of these features makes for energy use that is less than 50% of typical homes.

Founding member Tom Prince says that the Commons remains a faith community, although newer members do attend churches other than Rockridge



Local community artist Jeff Norman recently installed "Faces of Temescal," a 52-foot-long banner on the fence in front of the vacant lot at 4700 Telegraph Ave. The banner features portraits of people who live, work, or attend school in Temescal. The project was commissioned by the local development team of Roy Alper, Ron Kriss, and Patrick Zimski, who own the vacant property. Photo: Jeff Norman

Methodist. What has also endured from the beginning is the strong sense of community, founded on shared values and real interdependence. Members often watch one another's kids for a couple hours, borrow a car, or work side by side at TCC's monthly "chore day." The sense of community has extended into the larger Temescal neighborhood.

Prince says TCC initially focused on outreach efforts in the neighborhood, such as helping at an after-school program at Emerson Elementary. Now the community "comes in," drawn to TCC's liveliness and shared facilities. Neighborhood kids come to play basketball at the TCC hoop, and some of the Oakland Tech football team shares the weight room in the off-season. All sorts of community groups have used the common house, including cub scouts, local artists and bible study groups. At a shared Sunday meal that I attended in July, the group prayed before our meal, TCC members linking hands with their Temescal neighbors.

For more information about TCC, contact Tom Garlick at flymeaway@sbcglobal.net.
— Carla Koop

Two Ways Temescal Residents Can Help Emerson Elementary School

Build Community Support – We are a small but growing group of parents of preschool children who live in the Emerson School assignment district (the district extends north to Clifton St. in Rockridge, and south to 36th St. near Mosswood Park). We hope to generate interest in and support for the school by bringing together Temescal neighborhood

families. The school has its share of challenges, but it also has some things going for it, including its small size, a decent facility, and a new principal who is dynamic, experienced, and committed.

Ideas we have discussed so far include organizing informal get-togethers of neighborhood parents and kids, helping coordinate volunteer opportunities at the school, and possibly holding a fundraising event like a community yard sale or book drive. We have already met with Wendi Caporicci, the new principal, and she is enthusiastic about our efforts.

We welcome any and all suggestions about how to make this happen. And we would love for you to join us in our efforts to create a true neighborhood school for the Temescal district. If you are interested in joining our group, please contact Beth McKenna at beth.mckenna@gmail.com or 594-0571; or Christie Beeman at christiebee@sbcglobal.net, 450-0585.

– Beth McKenna

Keep Emerson's Library Open – Last September, for the first time in seven years, the students at Emerson were able to visit their school library due to the generosity of the Kiwanis Club, Mustard Seed, and Faith Network. These organizations generously donated time, energy, and money to refurbish and reopen the room that was being used for everything but the purpose it was designed and built for. To keep the library running, these organizations even funded a part-time librarian, Susan White, who worked almost as much as the full-time staff.

As the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year approaches, Emerson is once again faced with the dilemma of how to keep the library open. In these days of budgetary cutbacks, most parents are all too well aware that public schools engage in fundraising to pay for "extras" like art, music and a librarian. Unfortunately, unlike some schools in the Oakland Unified School District, Emerson is not in the position to do this. If the principal, Wendi Caporicci and her staff are to succeed at recreating a community-based school that reflects all residents of the Temescal neighborhood, it is imperative that the school offers all the services children need and deserve: services that many communities have the luxury of taking for granted but unfortunately require more money than Emerson has in their site-based budget for the year.

For this reason, Emerson is appealing for help to the community-at-large for assistance, asking for several dedicated, reliable volunteers to staff the library on a part-time basis. At the minimum, the school hopes to keep the library open on a daily basis from 12:00 to 3:00, providing the opportunity for all students to visit for 30 minutes once a week. Volunteers should expect to work a 2 to 3 hour shift assisting teachers during scheduled classroom visits. A brief orientation and training will be scheduled for all volunteers. If you are interested, please call fifth grade teacher Tara Wolf, who will be coordinating the program, at 428-1744.

And if you're new to the neighborhood, have school-age children, are interested in volunteering in the classroom, or just want to get acquainted, drop by Emerson Elementary, located at 4803 Lawton Avenue, or call the principal, Wendi Caporicci, at 879-1152 to schedule a visit.

– Tara Wolf

"Pussycat" Site Developers Show Plans to Community

Two months ago we reported to you that plans were afoot for a long-awaited mixed-use residential development project at the corner of 51st and Telegraph. The project site also includes the Children's Hospital surface parking lot that extends behind Global Entertainment to Clarke St. as well as the (formerly) City land along 51st Street. The total site area is about 40,000 square feet, just under an acre.

Local developers Ron Kriss, Roy Alper, and Pat Zimski, along with the architectural firm Van Meter, Williams and Pollack, would like to show the plans to the community. The meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 19, at the Faith Presbyterian Church at 49th and Webster from 7 to 8:30 PM.

The developers and architect have been working for the last several months on the project's design and have met twice with a small group of neighbors from Temescal and Rockridge to gain preliminary community input and design suggestions. They have been working in the context of the community "Values Statement" that was developed by Temescal neighbors back in 2000. Copies of that Values Statement will be available at the meeting. Come on out and get a heads-up on the next significant development in Temescal! For more information contact me at 550-4200 x512, or bill@shastapros.com.

– Bill Lambert

Another Side of Redevelopment

Editor's Note: The last issue of Temescal News & Views contained an article opposing the proposed expansion of the North Oakland Redevelopment area ("Neighbors Oppose Redevelopment Initiative," July-August 2005). Below is an alternate viewpoint on the redevelopment plan.

"Redevelopment" is a mechanism that brings about two basic funding opportunities for projects within a designated area. First, as property values increase, a Redevelopment Area (RDA) captures some of the increase in property-tax revenue, known as "tax increment," into a fund pool called Tax Increment Financing (TIF). This TIF pool is reinvested in such neighborhood improvements as streetscapes, lighting, and safety. Second, a RDA designation allows the city to float bond measures on future TIF that can generate additional funding for these projects.

Why expand the Redevelopment Area?

The case for the Redevelopment area (RDA) in our neighborhood is simple: The city has proposed this method to fund improvements that we've been asking for. Expanding the RDA into a comprehensive area, rather than creating a separate, new RDA, will create a more stable foundation for issuing bonds for area improvements.

The purpose of the RDA expansion is not to prop up the proposed MacArthur BART Transit Village. The transit village, in fact, is inside the existing RDA and has already identified its sources of TIF funds and bonds. The bonds will simply carry lower interest rates with the larger RDA. Additionally, TIF funds created by the larger RDA will become available for capital improvements and business development throughout the expanded zone. Streetscape and pedestrian safety improvements, such as those currently planned in the existing RDA on 40th Street and Telegraph Avenue up to 42nd, could extend further into our neighborhoods, if we become part of it.

An example of a similar project within Oakland's Central City East RDA is the successful Fruitvale Transit Village. In that project only about 4 percent of the funding came from Redevelopment Agency funds, and its success has ultimately contributed to the growth of the TIF pool through property value increases. It's a successful cycle: Creating funding stimulates positive change, which in turn creates additional funding for more improvements in the RDA.

Will the RDA suck up our area's contribution to the General Fund for city services?

In our district, less than 1 percent of our overall property taxes supply the General Fund. Most of the General Fund comes from business and sales taxes and auto registration fees, and the TIF program does not capture any of these revenue streams. TIF is funded only through property taxes received above and beyond the "base year" assessed values. Throughout the lifetime of the RDA, the general fund will continue to receive the "base year" revenues, along with a percentage of each year's tax increment. The amount of money diverted from the general fund, spread over the entire city, will have minimal impact, while that same money will visibly improve our neighborhoods if captured by the TIF.

Should we be worried about eminent domain?

A designation of "Redevelopment" does allow the city to exercise the use of eminent domain, and probably this is our greatest concern. But in the past 15 years, the City of Oakland has exercised eminent domain within a Redevelopment area only four times and never taken a residential property. (In the Uptown district, the city is currently undergoing eminent domain proceedings on eight properties, all of which are commercial.) If and when this area gets a Redevelopment designation, the city has promised to work closely with the community to put stipulations in the plan that would limit the threat of residential eminent domain.

We feel that TIF for public improvements will make our streets more beautiful and safer, help maintain the exciting private investment that is currently under way, and secure our investments in this great community. — *Elise Miller, Jason Gardner, and other Temescal neighbors*

Oakland Trib Proclaims Temescal "Hip"

Did Temescalites notice the article that appeared in the Oakland Tribune this past August 7? You couldn't have missed it, if you read the paper. To summarize, the article called 94609 one of Oakland trendiest ZIP codes and focused mainly on all the new businesses moving in and improvements being made on Telegraph. It mentioned some of Temescal's finest, such as Dona Tomas, Tanjia, Lanesplitter, Pizzaiolo, and Bakesale

Betty as destinations for "the fashionably hip, young families and older fine diners."

The Temescal Telegraph Community Association that manages the Business Improvement District is glad its hard work is being noticed. Upcoming projects include adding more trees on Telegraph, a lively neighborhood directory, a holiday event on December 1st, and sidewalk seating so diners and shoppers will "hang out" on the street more and build upon the sense of community.

If you would like to participate in any of the action committees working on these and other projects, or for more information, please call 860-7327. — *Darlene Rios Drapkin*

A Bounty of Fall Offerings at Temescal Library

We have a variety of programs planned for early fall and hope you will find something of interest!

Down to Earth Organic Gardening: Learn basic concepts such as soil amending, compost building, and pest control from a landscape gardener. Learn about organic lawn care and some basic design principles to help you make the right choices at the nursery and in your garden. This workshop will focus on ornamental rather than edible plants. Saturday, 9/17, 10 AM–12 noon.

How to Have More Fun in Your Life: We all want to have more fun, but our mental baggage drags us down. Kate Schrup, MPH, Certified Hypnotherapist and Reiki Master, will demonstrate simple techniques for releasing your "stuff." Monday, 10/3, 6:45–7:45 PM.

Basic Electrical Concepts: Learn about basic electrical concepts, tools, materials, and minor repairs from a professional electrician. Saturday, 10/15, 10 AM–12 noon.

Knitting Workshop: Four sessions for beginners. An experienced knitter will teach the basics: casting on, knitting and purling. Bring your projects and questions. Call the library to sign up for this workshop. Monday, 10/10, 6–8 PM; Saturday 10/15, 1–3 PM; Saturday, 10/22, 1–3 PM; Monday, 10/24, 6–8 PM.

French Classes: A regular patron and certified French teacher has offered to teach seven sessions (every other Friday), 3:30–5 PM on 9/23, 10/7, 10/21, 11/04, 11/18, 12/2 and 12/16. All ages, beginning and intermediate levels. Classes will cover grammar, conversation, songs, poems, culture, and travel tips. **PASS:** the library's homework assistance program will start up again in September. Our PASS program leader and teen mentors help

elementary school children with homework assignments on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 2:30 PM to 5:15 PM. Come by the library for more details.

Finally, there is a new schedule for the **Tool Lending Library**. It is open on Monday from 12:30–8 PM, Tuesday 10 AM–5:30 PM, Friday 12–5:30 PM, and Saturday 10 AM–5:30 PM. It is closed on Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday.

— *Sally Bean, Manager, Temescal Library*

Studio One Activities

Temescal neighbors, keep Studio One Art Center in mind even though we are not currently holding classes on 45th Street. The 8-week fall program of art and fitness classes runs from Sept. 12 to Nov. 5 and is being held at our current location in downtown Oakland. Prompt registration is encouraged to ensure your place in the class(es) that interest you; call 597-5027 to register.

A special free studio day is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 29, from 10 AM to noon. There will be ample space to create a Halloween costume or mask, make paper crafts, or just have fun with art. Look for future notices about Art Play Days in the art listings in local community calendars.

Become a patron or continue to be a patron of Studio One—you are investing in the Studio by taking classes. The Studio is located at 1428 Alice Street (at 14th Street) and is accessible by BART and AC Transit. If you're driving, there are parking lots across the street. — *Tomye Neal-Madison*

What's In Our Water?

Friends of Temescal Creek is a volunteer-based effort to enhance Temescal Creek as a recreational and wildlife corridor within the urban landscape. A dedicated volunteer group continues water-quality monitoring and sampling.

In June, we completed another series of bacteriological sampling. This consists of weekly samples collected at about the same time of day each week and delivered to the EPA's field laboratory in Richmond. Sampling locations were at the Lake Temescal inlet, Oakvale Avenue near Claremont Avenue, Saint Albert's Priory, Hardy Park, and Redondo Park. Overall, the laboratory results indicate that it is safe to wade in the creek but don't drink the water, and wash your hands before eating and after playing.

Temescal Calendar

Ongoing. Several Studio One art teachers are participating in a series of one-person art exhibits at the Matilda Brown House, 360 40th Street. Tomye's mixed-media artworks will be on display through Sept. 22, with other artists thereafter. To see the art, contact the Matilda Brown House at 658-5565.

Multiple Dates in September and October.

The Temescal Library hosts several workshops and classes on a variety of topics. See the article on page 3 for details. Temescal Library, 5205 Telegraph. 597-5049.

Saturday, September 3, 9 AM. Green Panthers beautification activity. All gardeners welcome! Meet at 51st and Telegraph. 655-8855.

Thursday, September 8, 7 PM. Temescal Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) Steering Committee meeting. Everyone welcome. Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th and Webster. 420-6974.

Friday, September 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.

Saturday, September 10, 9 AM. Annual Rich Street Garage Sale and Block Party. Rich Street, just off 42nd and Telegraph.

Wednesday, September 14, 6 PM. Temescal Merchants Association monthly meeting. All are welcome. Temescal Library, 5205 Telegraph. 653-7196.

Saturday, September 17, 9 AM. Temescal Creek cleanup and community potluck. Meet in the DMV parking lot (at Claremont and Cavour). 655-1767.

Saturday, September 17, 10 AM. Help monitor water quality in Temescal Creek. Meet at the south end of Lake Temescal Park. 459-3967.

Monday, September 19, 7 PM. Community meeting to present development plans for the corner of 51st and Telegraph. Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th and Webster. 550-4200 x512.

Saturday, October 1, 9 AM. Green Panthers beautification activity. Meet at 51st and Telegraph. 655-8855.

Saturday, October 1, 10 AM. Jane Brunner's Community Meeting. The topic is *Caltrans in North Oakland*. Peralta School, 460 63rd St. 238-7013.

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

Thursday, October 13, 7 PM. Temescal Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) Steering Committee meeting. Everyone welcome. Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th St. and Webster. 420-6974.

Friday, October 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, October 15, 10 AM. Help monitor water quality in Temescal Creek. Meet at the south end of Lake Temescal Park. 459-3967.

Saturday, October 29, 10 AM. Studio One Art Play Day. 1428 Alice Street (at 14th). 597-5027.

Monthly water-quality results continue to be consistent.

We will be using the recent results to fine-tune our sampling and monitoring strategy. We hope to conduct another series of bacteriological samples before the year is out. We are also researching the benefits and resources needed to sample for chemical contaminants in the watershed this fall.

Please join us on the third Saturday of every month at 10 AM at the south end of Lake Temescal Park for monitoring and testing, and to generally enjoy some time at the park discussing ecological conditions in our watershed. We would especially like to connect with any educators that may be able to help us tailor our monitoring and sampling to fit school project requirements. For more info, e-mail fotc2005@yahoo.com or call Josh Bergstrom at 459-3967. — Josh Bergstrom

NCPC News – Protect Yourself

Developing an Urban Mentality—that's our goal for residents in Beat 12X. (Temescal is one of 57 community policing beats in Oakland.) Statistics show that crime is generally down in most categories in North Oakland. We don't have as many drug arrests or assaults/homicides as other beats. However, property crimes, such as home and auto robberies, remain very high in North Oakland.

Robberies and Walking to BART

It's dangerous walking to the MacArthur BART station—at any time, morning, mid-day, or night. Oakland and BART police have supported us by doing surveillance and decoy arrests, but this corridor remains dangerous. You can protect yourself by: being alert to those around you; walking with another person, if possible; carrying a whistle to alert others for help; and avoiding wearing backpacks, as criminals easily pull victims over

backwards. Injuries can accompany the thefts.

Auto and Home Theft

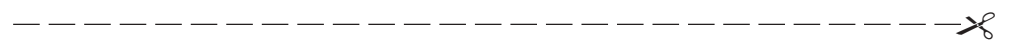
DON'T leave anything valuable in your vehicle. Thieves will break in, even for small change. DO lock your vehicle. It sounds simple, but it's easy to forget. Get The Club or any type of locking tool. These aren't fool-proof, but they may persuade a thief to leave your car alone. Install a car alarm. Get to know your neighbors. Exchange phone numbers, and be ready to call 911 if someone suspicious is looking into a neighbor's house or car. — Don Lowrey, NCPC Chair

Creek to Bay Day – Temescal Creek Cleanup

As part of California's Coastal Cleanup Day events, the DMV Neighbors Association (DNA) and the City of Oakland are sponsoring a cleanup of Temescal Creek on Saturday, September 17, from 9 AM to noon. Meet in the DMV parking lot at Claremont and Cavour. We'll clear watercress from the creek so it flows freely, and then enjoy a potluck lunch from 12:15 to 1:30 at the corner of Redondo at Cavour.

Wear long pants and close-toed shoes—boots are recommended. The event will take place rain or shine. Bring a cup and/or water bottle for drinks to reduce waste. If you have them, bring work gloves, favorite tools, and wheelbarrows (label all personal items with your name). The City of Oakland Public Works Dept. will supply gloves, garbage bags, and tools. For the potluck, bring a dish to share, and a chair if you can. The Colombo Club will provide pasta and garlic bread, and the DNA will bring dessert and beverages. Please join us for the potluck even if you can't make it to the creek cleanup! Call Margaret at 655-1767 for more information.

— Margaret Pinter



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