

Thousand Oaks Neighborhood Association

October 2012 Newsletter



P.O. BOX 7572 • BERKELEY, CA 94707

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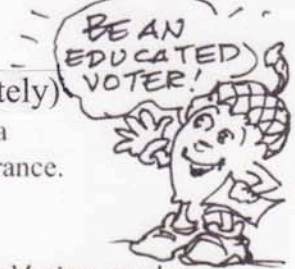
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TONA General Meeting

Thursday, October 18, 2012, 7:00 to 9:00 PM (approximately)

Thousand Oaks Baptist Church Auditorium, Catalina at Colusa
Enter on Catalina about half a block east from the main church entrance.



Agenda:

Local Candidates and Ballot Measures Forum

- 7:00 School Board Candidates
Judy Appel
Norma J. F. Harrison
Tracy Hollander
Beatrice Leyva-Cutler
- About 7:45 Ballot Initiatives
Measure S (Sit/Lie Ordinance)
Measure V (FACTS Ordinance—
20-Year Obligation Reports)
- About 8:45 City Council Candidates for District 5
Laurie Capitelli
Sophie Hahn



Ranked-Choice Voting on the November Ballot

In races with more than two candidates this November, ballots will offer ranked-choice voting, or RCV (also known as instant-runoff voting, or IRV). You can vote for your first, second, and third choices for that office. This will apply in the mayor's race this election and in some city council races, although not District 5's, where there are only two candidates.

The purpose of RCV is to elect a candidate with more than 50% of the votes without having to hold a special runoff election.

When the ballots are counted, if any candidate has more than 50% of the first-choice votes, he or she is the winner. If no candidate has more than 50%, the ballots for the candidate who got the lowest number of first-choice votes are looked at, and their second-choice votes are allocated to the remaining candidates. If those don't put one candidate over the 50% mark, the process of eliminating the lowest vote-getter and allocating the second choices (or, eventually, the third choices) on those ballots is repeated until one candidate has more than 50%.

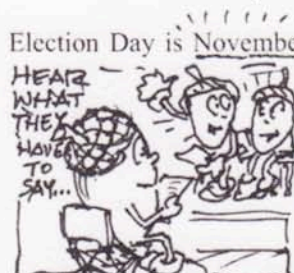
Note that RCV will not apply in the school board and rent board races, where several slots are open and the races go to the top several candidates whether they receive more than 50% of the total vote or not.

For more information, go to <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/rev/>.

Election Day is November 6. Come hear what our local candidates and some Berkeley ballot measures are all about. TONA's forum will have three sections. First, we'll hear from the four candidates running for two seats on the BUSD school board. Next, proponents and opponents will discuss two initiatives, the "Sit/Lie" ordinance and the "FACT" ordinance. Third, the two candidates for the District 5 seat on the City Council will appear.

In each part of the program, speakers will give short presentations, after which audience members can ask brief questions, and each speaker will have a few minutes to answer each question.

This meeting is likely to last longer than usual, to allow for full discussion. Because of limited time, however, it will not cover the mayoral or rent board races or the other eight Berkeley ballot initiatives. Nonpartisan information about these can be found on the City of Berkeley website, www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/elections/.



Hear the Candidates for Mayor
North East Berkeley Association (NEBA)
Candidate Fair and Forum, Thursday, October 11,
6 to 9 pm, Northbrae Community Church,
941 The Alameda (at Los Angeles).

Solano Avenue Street and Sidewalk Changes

You've probably noticed the new bulb-outs on upper Solano at Colusa, which were completed just before the Solano Stroll, as promised.

These changes are funded with a Safe Routes to Transit grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. The project will add 50 red point maple trees (light-textured, deciduous trees that grow to a maximum of 40

feet) and a bicycle shelter at the 76 gas station corner.

The recently resurrected Solano Business Improvement District (SBID) Advisory Board is working with the city to propose and give feedback on further improvements. At a meeting on July 18, 2012, longtime landscape architect and local resident John Roberts, volunteering his expertise, presented his vision of possible Solano Avenue improvements in three phases. The MTC-funded changes described here are the first phase. Second and third phases do not yet have funding, and the SBID will review the possibilities and make proposals to the Planning Commission and the City Council. Roberts's ideas included widening sidewalks to accommodate seating and tables, where appropriate, to make Solano comparable to the sidewalk on Center Street between Oxford and Shattuck downtown; adding bulb-outs at other corners; and even closing the south intersection of Colusa and Solano to create a pedestrian mini-plaza. The last idea provoked some controversy immediately. The SBID will have to fund or find funding for any proposals beyond phase one.

The current phase and Roberts's ideas for future plans have been designed to keep the same number of parking places, in some cases by changing the angle of parking slots like those in the Albany section of Solano.

Reconfiguration of traffic lanes is part of phase one and may continue in later phases. No traffic lanes will be lost, but lanes may be narrowed in areas where the street is now wide.

A second meeting of the SBID Advisory Board, on August 22, focused on the locations and grates for 34 of the new street trees.

Both meetings were well attended by Solano Avenue merchants plus some interested residents who heard about the events. The city contact for the SBID is Dave Fogarty of the Office of Economic Development, 981-7534, dfogarty@cityofberkeley.info.

On the Avenue ★★★★★

• **5 Star Video** has moved into 1880 Solano. Owner Alan Katz had been seeking a larger, better-lit space for some time, as his DVD collection was pushing the limits of its Albany location. The store's new home meets and surpasses those goals. The high-ceiling, spacious storefront has room for all the titles Alan plans to buy. Andrea, 5 Star's assistant manager, says, "We really want to expand our foreign, classic, and independent film sections."

What is 5 Star's success formula? Most of Berkeley's other video stores have gone out of business, but 5 Star is expanding. Andrea says Alan really knows how to stock the shop for his clientele and truly appreciates loyal customers. Patrons from Albany have been willing to travel a little farther to the new location, while increased foot traffic on upper Solano has brought in new sign-ups. Andrea reports that some folks plan to cancel their Netflix accounts because they prefer being able to browse the many titles in the shop. 5 Star gives us one more reason to be thankful that Solano Avenue is our home turf.



• The 38th annual **Solano Stroll** on September 9 was a huge success, as we've come to expect. The length of Solano was filled with vendors, entertainers, and strollers, all having a great time. Residents were especially pleased that the musicians kept almost universally within tolerable sound levels, that street cleaning beforehand was done the evening before (not noisily at 6 am on Sunday), and that cleanup afterward was efficient and thorough. Kudos to Alan Cain who so expertly organized this event, as usual, and to the many volunteers who played a role in making it a success.



There's an App for That!

See Click Fix!

A website and smartphone app, SeeClickFix.com, enables neighbors to report local issues and engage officials and other neighbors in solving problems.

Engaged communities do the hard work by collaborating to get stuff done: If you see a non-emergency issue anywhere in the world, you can file a report online or via mobile phone. Or you can see issues reported by others by creating keyword- and geography-based "watch areas." For example:



- Citizens report issues on the go and set up watch areas to monitor their block (aka "eyes on the street").
- Neighborhood groups and advocates follow reports of blocked bike lanes, broken windows, or idling vehicles.
- Government staff watch for potholes and cracked sidewalks; a police captain can monitor crime issues being reported within the precinct.
- Media outlets and local bloggers are the first to know when issues "pop up" in their areas.

See Click Fix is an easy way to get the word out about local problems and help solve them. When you sign up on the website, identify Berkeley as your "watch area," and follow the issues. Try it!



Neighborhood Gardening Project?

TONA has received several inquiries about the condition of the grounds around Thousand Oaks Baptist Church at Colusa and Catalina. We would like to approach the pastor of the church with an offer to help with landscaping to improve the look of this graceful church. If such a project interests you, please contact Elizabeth Sklut at 527-5512, or send a note to TONA, PO Box 7572, Berkeley CA 94707.



School Corner



New Principal, Read-a-Thon, and More

Drive Carefully on Colusa, Please. T.O. School's 2012 Fall enrollment is 447 students! We appreciate having our neighbors drive cautiously and carefully, mindful of traffic signage (no left turn signs, stop signs, and traffic lights) on adjacent streets during the morning commute while children make their way onto the school grounds before the 8 am school bell.

New Principal. We welcome Gayle Hughes, our new principal, who relocated from Southern California to the Bay Area due to her husband's position at a biotech firm. Throughout her career as an educator, Gayle has served in many academic roles.

Box Tops and Scrip. There are boxes in the school office where you can deposit Box Tops and Labels for Education, which earn money for the school. Submissions are ongoing, so please keep clipping! Our school also takes part in the eScrip program, so consider us if you sign up. Go to www.escrip.com, click "sign up," and select Thousand Oaks as your group (ID #137317522).

Read-a-Thon. The school's 2012 Read-a-Thon is later this month, so don't be surprised if you receive a knock at your door from a T.O. student requesting a pledge. This year, students are reading to raise money for digital document projectors for all grades. Our school's mantra is: be safe, be respectful, and be responsible, and these are principles instilled in T.O. students who mingle in and around our school's community.



Volunteers Welcome! If you have an urge to volunteer and an hour to spare, there are many ways to help both inside and outside the classrooms. Please inquire with Volunteer Coordinator Simin O'Brien (toptavolunteer@gmail.com) if this might interest you.

No Skateboarding, Please. Skateboarding on T.O. school grounds is a code violation and causes major infrastructure damage and unsafe surroundings. The school encourages all forms of athleticism, but please tell your household members to choose the skateboard venue at 5th and Harrison Streets to practice their sport!

Halloween Parade. Do join us on October 31 for our annual Halloween Parade! The entire creatively costumed student body marches along the top of Solano Avenue starting around 11 am.

Follow Thousand Oaks Elementary School on Facebook, and check out our website: <http://to.berkeleypta.org/>.

TONA Urns Earn BAHHA Award

The TONA Urn Project has been awarded a Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association Preservation Award for the Historic 1910 Urn Replication and Restoration. Co-chairs Trish Hawthorne and Elizabeth Sklut are grateful for this commendation of the neighborhood's successful efforts to re-create our "civic art." The award recognizes the volunteer work of many

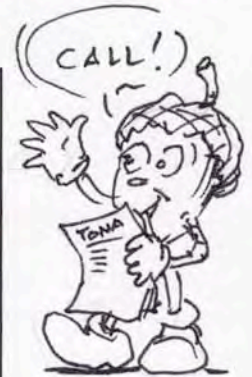
Thousand Oaks residents, the accurate replication of the original urns, and the care involved in their siting and installation, as well as the commitment of many, many neighbors to the project through grassroots financial support. This is an honor we all share.

Our two new urns (located in Stoneface Park and in the triangle at the Alameda and Yosemite) and the restored original urn (on the Alameda at the base of Indian Trail) have received enthusiastic compliments from residents, who continue to donate to the project. In addition, generous neighbors have offered a \$2,000 loan to the Urn Project to speed up the process of creating and installing two more

new urns. This wonderful support has definitely given us momentum.

We are discussing possible locations with the city and are particularly interested in sites where original urns once stood. We have photographs of some of those sites and are investigating two: on the Arlington and on the Alameda at Tacoma. We hope that the two new urns can be installed in the spring of 2013.

We welcome your suggestions and, of course, your tax-deductible donations. Please make checks payable to Berkeley Partners for Parks, and add "TONA Urn Fund" to the memo line. Mail to TONA, PO Box 7572, Berkeley CA 94707, to help add more handsome urns to our neighborhood.



**Neighborhood Newsletter
Deliverers:
Want a Heads-Up?**

If you would like advance notice of the newsletter delivery schedule, please send your contact info to Claire Magowan at 510-528-1155 or ccmagowan@yahoo.com.

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TONA Membership Form

Dues per year: \$4 Senior, \$6 Single, \$10 Family.

Send dues to: **TONA, P.O. Box 7572, Berkeley, CA 94707**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Comment: _____

- Yes, I will deliver newsletters in my neighborhood.
- I am enclosing a donation to the Urn Fund, made payable to BPPF, with TONA Urn Fund on the memo line.