The Rockridge News

Sponsored by • The ROCKRIDGE COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL • 5856 College Avenue #130 • Oakland California • 94618

Vol. 2 No. 9 Issue No. 21 ★ January 16, 1988 ★ Circulation: 4,500 Residences; 200 Businesses

Updates, Notes, Reports

Oakland Budget A Topic For General Meeting

The projected City deficit of $12–17 million and attendant proposed cuts in City services are slated for discussion at the RCPC General Meeting set for **Wednesday, January 20, 7:30 pm at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church.**

Councilmember Marge Gibson–Haskell and other City representaives will be on hand to discuss the City's financial future. Come hear the facts and the options and let them know how *you* feel.

RCPC Board Election

Membership of the RCPC Board of Directors for the coming year will be determined by Neighborhood voters at the General Meeting to be held Wednesday, January 20, 7:30 pm, at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Voters will cast their ballots for a total of ten Board members from candidates selected by the nominating committee. Voters must be at least 18 years of age and will be asked to verify their residence in the Rockridge Area as defined in the By–Laws of the Rockridge Community Planning Council.

Current nominees are:

Ms. Barbara Anderson
Mr. Marc Beyeler
Ms. Nancy Dutcher
Mr. Glen Jarvis
Mr. John Gussman
Mr. Don Kinkead
Ms. Brooke Levin
Mr. Kerry O'Banion
Mr. Ray Perman

Nominations may be entered until declared closed by the Chair prior to the time of the vote at the General Meeting. Names may be submitted by mail or in person to the following Nominating Committee members: Mr. Ray Craun (655–6589), Ms. Karen Paulsell (655–0818) and Ms. Ethel Ruymaker (658–3912). Nominations should include the addresses of the nominee and of the nominator. Send your nominations to:

RCPC Board Nominations c/o RCPC
5856 College Avenue #130 Oakland, CA 94618.

Please turn to *"Updates, Notes"*, page 3

Message Of Cheer For The New Year

A Look Back As We Move Forward

by Barbara B. Anderson, Chair
Rockridge Community Planning Council

Looking back at 1987, it's hard to believe that so much was attempted... so much was achieved. The ranks of RCPC 's block captain network swelled to 125 volunteers; The Rockridge News now publishes eight pages of neighborhood and planning news; RCPC is actively involved in the planning of our greater community as part of the North Oakland Community Development Committee; one of our Board Directors is now a member of the Mayor's Economic Development Advisory Committee. Perhaps as you peruse the following highlights, you'll agree that...

1987: It Was A Very Good Year!

For The Rockridge News

- The newsletter sponsored by RCPC received a Journalism Award from the Northern California Section of the American Planning Association for Outstanding Coverage of Community Planning Issues by a newspaper with a circulation below 100,000.

For Citizen Participation in Government

- In response to citizen protest, the Street–Sweeping program in Rockridge was amended and can now be tailored to citizens' needs on a block–by–block basis.
- Rockridge Neighbors also rallied to the cause of the Branch Library and helped to assure its continued presence on College Avenue.
- The City expanded the Public Noticing procedure to reach residents within a 300 ft radius shortly after RCPC and other Neighborhood groups made specific recommendations for change.

Please turn to *"Message"*, page 3

Dates Calendar Events Calendar Dates

• Tuesday	Jan 19	7:30 pm	City Council Meeting	City Hall.
• Wednesday	Jan 20	7:30 pm	RCPC General Meeting	College Avenue Presbyterian Church. Annual election of RCPC Board of Directors; City Council Tax Plans.
• Thursday	Jan 21	4:30 pm	Police Department Meeting	Chief's Conference Room, 455 7th Street.
• Tuesday	Jan 26	7:30 pm	City Council Meeting	City Hall.
• Wednesday	Jan 27	1:30 pm	Planning Commission Meeting	City Hall, Room 115. Regular meeting.

A Brief History of Public Transit in Oakland, Part II

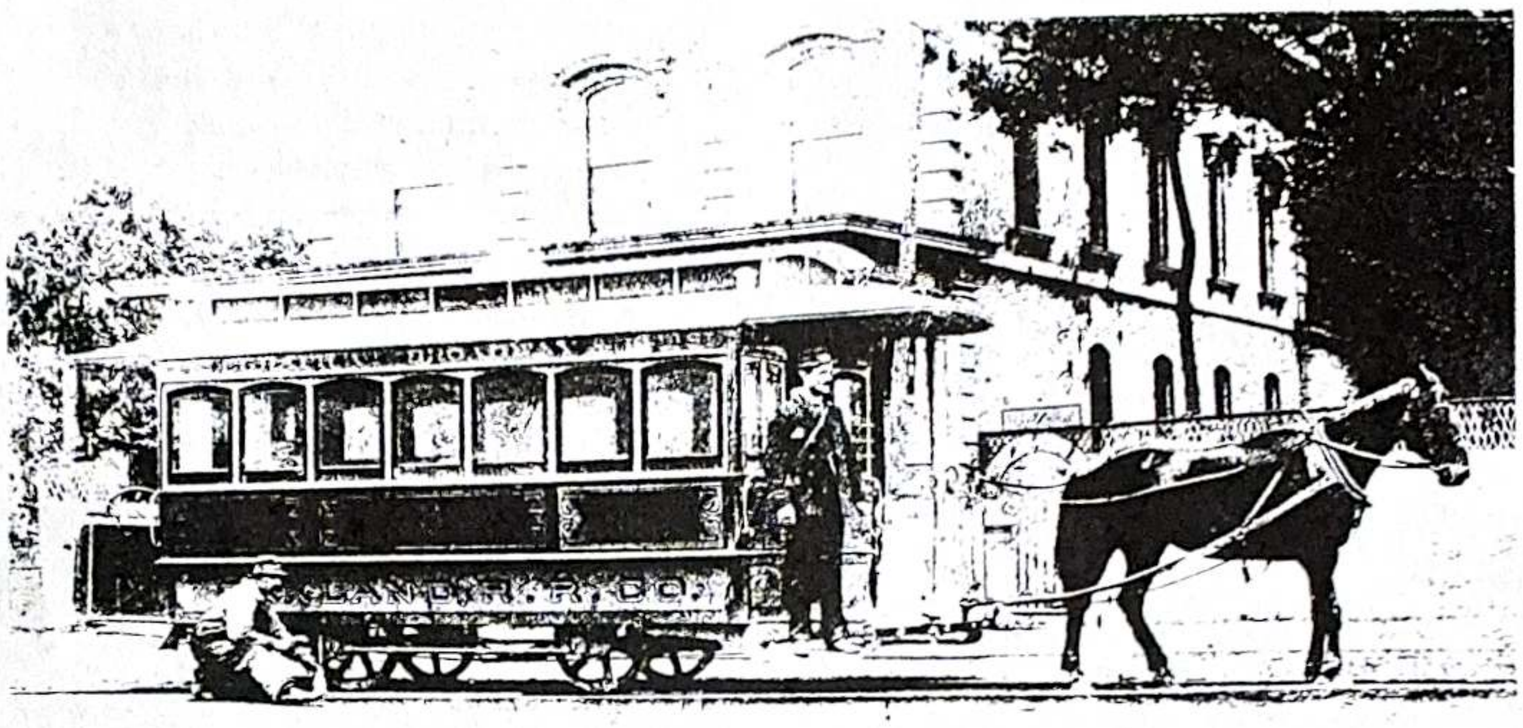
By Andrea V. Gabriel

Part II of a two–part article. *Some of the information for this article was taken from an unpublished manuscript by Francis X. Flood in the Oakland History Room of the Oakland Public Library. I thank Rockridge resident Julie Dewey for additional research material.*

Rockridge Routes

As electric streetcars and trains became commonplace, a complex system of routes was established throughout Oakland's neighborhoods. As Beth Bagwell notes in *Oakland, The Story Of a City,* "Out of this cheerful muddle of horsecar lines, optimistic entrepreneurs in the late 1870s and 1880s laid out patterns of neighborhood development, traffic arteries and commercial strips that are still with us today." Fred Reed, who developed much of Upper Rockridge for the Laymance Realty Company, purchased a bus to run along Broadway to bring prospective buyers to building sites. (He is said to be the first person in Oakland to collect bus fares.)

The Sacramento Northern established one of the main routes through Rockridge, running a train from Oakland to Sacramento that connected Oakland to remote communities on the other side of the hills. From the main station at 40th and Shafter, the train ran up Shafter Avenue to Broadway, around Lake Temescal and into Montclair. Nevertheless, the convenience of nearby public transportation failed to endear neighbors who had to live with tracks running through their neighborhood. "The running of both passenger trains and freight on Shafter Avenue's single track quickly aroused the enmity of the street's residents, an attitude which persisted up to and including the last day of operation, February 28, 1957." (Paul C. Trimble, *Interurban Railways Of the Bay Area.*) When the railway wanted to put a car barn near a branch station located near Shafter and College, alarmed neighbors banded together and quickly quelled the idea.



A horse car on Telegraph Avenue, transportation predecessor to electric streetcars and trains. (This photograph also pictures the front of the Cattaneo Block, a building built in 1871–2 and now the home of G & G Hardware.) (Photo: Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library)

Other Oakland Lines

The Key System ran other lines in Oakland. The E Line ran from Key Pier to 55th Street, then up Claremont to the station at Claremont and Domingo. The K Line ran along Alcatraz and College. Rockridge resident Julie Dewey remembers taking the train to San Francisco as a young girl. "We'd catch the train at Hudson and Claremont," she relates. "You had to step up real high to get into the train. The seats were hard straw—rattan—and the train was very noisy. We would go down 55th Street to the Oakland Mole to catch the Ferry. It was a great adventure when you were small."

Decline Of The Key System and The Rise Of AC Transit and BART

With the completion of the Bay Bridge, trans–Bay service changed drastically, producing a "domino effect" among interurban travel systems. Ferry lines ceased as the Sacramento Northern, Southern Pacific's Interurban Electric Railway, and the Key System provided access by rails via the lower deck of the Bay Bridge. In 1941, the Key System became the sole trans–Bay carrier when the others stopped running trains over the Bridge. In 1941, removal of streetcar tracks began when those routes were taken over by the Key System's bus fleets. (The Key System started bus operations in 1935.) In 1948 streetcars were discontinued. Trains continued to run across the Bay Bridge until 1958 when the operation was discontinued.

Key System buses provided public transit for the East Bay but the company was beset by poor management, labor disputes and declining revenues. A major strike in 1953 heralded a new change. Citizens of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties voted in 1955 to establish a new mass transit system. A special district was sanctioned to acquire and operate a publicly owned transit system. In 1960, the Key System finally came to an end when AC Transit bought its equipment and route franchises.

The Coming Of BART

Meanwhile, in 1957, the State Legislature ended years of studying transportation trends and development and created the Bay Area Rapid Transit District. Construction began in 1962 to join communities in Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco Counties by a seventy–one mile rapid rail transit system. It was completed in 1972.

It is difficult today to ever believe that Rockridge was farm area and that the gentle rolling hills to the East were bare. It is hard to imagine College Avenue as a dirt road.

When we look at the rise of cities and their communities, we can see that commercial and residential districts always have developed in conjunction with major transportation routes.

Students of transportation point out that— once established— travel routes tend to remain unchanged, regardless of the vehicle of transport. As Beth Bagwell notes, "The routes of AC Transit and those of BART follow very closely the routes used at the turn of the century by the Key Route and the Southern Pacific, which in many cases had first been laid out even earlier for horse railways or steam trains."

"Message", from page 1

- Oak Grove Avenue residents became the first in Oakland to take advantage of the Residential Preferential Parking Program.
- RCPC sponsored a well–attended Candidates Night prior to the City Council and School Board Elections in June.
- RCPC created the Neighborhood Action Package to distribute to anyone interested in participating in the planning process.

FOR LAYING PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF ROCKRIDGE

- RCPC and the College Avenue Merchants persuaded the City to study the feasibility of a multi–use development on the Art Stone property at College and Manila, including the construction of a new Rockridge Branch library on this site.
- Neighbors and Merchants launched the concept of the "Rockridge Area Specific Plan" and got endorsement from the City Council. University of California Graduate City Planning students published essential research and data in the *Rockridge Report*. RCPC held several community brainstorming sessions to identify issues and opportunities for our community's future. RCPC developed two Grant proposals expected to be funded in 1988 to support the Consensus–building phase of RASP.

1988 PREDICTIONS FOR ROCKRIDGE?

- As the New Year begins, on the horizon still looms the spectre of the plans by the Dreyer's Corporation to relocate its international headquarters to College Avenue. The EIR has been filed with the City but it has yet to be released for public review. The City expects to finish its review of the EIR by the end of January.
- There's lots of work ahead for our community as we continue to make hard choices about solving our immediate problems of housing availability, safety, parking and circulation, and conservation of resources.
- There are many challenges in the year ahead as we anticipate our future needs in light of the many varied and sometimes opposing viewpoints in our community.

ROCKRIDGE IN 1988? IN 1990? IN 2000?

It's up to all of us! Your participation in the community forum is essential. Join with us in the coming year and help make RCPC even more effective!

"Updates, Notes", from page 1

Neighbors To Meet With Police Brass

Mr. Sam Lazar, Rockridge resident, Planning Commission member, and Chairman of the Oakland Citizen's Crime Prevention Committee has arranged a meeting between police representatives and concerned citizens and Neighbors of the Rockridge Area to discuss police response to thefts and break–ins.

The meeting— set for 4:30 pm Thursday, January 21, 1988, in the Chief's Conference Room, 8th Floor of the Oakland Police Department, 455 7th Street— will bring Beat Officer David Donovan, the Sergeant–In–Charge for Rockridge, and Vice Squad representatives together with Neighbors for a frank examination of Rockridge crime control.

For more information call Mr. Lazar at 655–4700, Ms. Sam Bieksza at 652–1765, Ms. Connie Kidder at 652–3080 or Ms. Dolores Bishop at 652–4526.

Wilson Associates Propose New College Avenue Building

Wilson Associates, builders of the Market Hall and Alta Bates Showcase buildings, have bought the "cement boat" lot on College Avenue near Hudson and propose to build a one–story commercial building with three storefronts on the site.

According to Mr. Anthony Wilson, a principal of the company, the 2,900 square foot building will be designed with a "front that is traditional" and will be primarily retail in its use. Construction is scheduled for the Spring.

A part of the process involves design review by City and RCPC representatives prior to final plan approval.

Preview: Treasurer's Report

Thank you for your generosity, kind words and support this past year.

Mr. Don Kinkead, RCPC Treasurer, reported to the Board that a steady (if only occasionally tremulous) stream of donations from friends, Neighbors and other supporters during the year helped meet the administrative costs of the organization and the production costs of **The Rockridge News**. Advertisements in the newsletter provided additional production funds and helped acquaint readers with College Avenue area merchants and their wares, as well.

A fuller statement of monies received and spent will appear in next month's **News**.

ROCKRIDGE COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL DONATION FORM

Yes! **Enroll Me as a Supporting Member** of the Rockridge Community Planning Council!
I have enclosed a check payable to RCPC for my tax–deductible donation for a year's registration and other support areas I have checked off:

Suggested minimum; $10 per category

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Mail to:

Don Kinkead
5626 Oak Grove Avenue
Oakland, CA 94618

Thank you!

The Business of Rockridge

College Avenue merchants, business people and property owners present their views in this column based on wide–ranging interviews. Interviewees were asked to comment on College Avenue, Rockridge, community communication, and the role of the City. They reviewed and approved these remarks prior to publication.

■ Kevin Brown

Owner, Better Homes Realty
5353 College Avenue

Born and raised in Oakland, Mr. Brown has lived in Berkeley for the past seven years. His family has had a real estate business in Oakland for over twenty–five years. He worked six years with his father in the office at Telegraph and 63rd. Three years ago, the Browns decided to move from their Telegraph Avenue location to their current College Avenue address. Mr. Brown is Vice President of the College Avenue Merchant's Association (CAMA).

College Avenue is a street of diverse businesses affected differently by different forces. Problems associated with this diversity include parking and noise.

Parking and Zoning

We need to look to zoning regulations to deal with the need for additional parking that new commercial development creates. Enforcing or changing zoning regulations dealing with parking is a planning decision that will have to be made by the City. In the meantime, it would be nice to see BART add parking space to ease the pressure on the upper part of College Avenue.

Restaurants are a part of the business diversity on College Avenue that some people see as a problem. Many residents in the area seem concerned about the number of restaurants and the possibility of "Regional Business" moving into the area. I don't think anyone wants to see a franchise operation such as a McDonald's move onto College Avenue, it would destroy the character of the neighborhood. With chain operations aside, I feel market demand will make the ultimate decision on the number or restaurants and their usage.

Planning Will Help Maintain College Avenue Quality

College Avenue Development

Many changes will occur with future development on the Avenue. Some developers feel RCPC has been unfair in the past and is opposed to development; I feel the City and the neighborhood should not make it as difficult for developers to complete their projects. Generally, City support for College Avenue has been good, and Marge Gibson-Haskell has helped a lot. Sometimes, though, developments need a variance from zoning to be built. I think the context of a development should determine the attitude toward variance requests. We need to look at each request on its own merits. For example, zoning limitations should affect big developments to protect the integrity of the area by keeping it less industrial.

Generally, I am pleased with the development and the quality of construction to date on the Avenue, but planning ahead is important to maintain the quality.

Planning and the Future

The Rockridge Area Specific Plan [RASP] can be a useful tool in dealing with current problems and shaping College Avenue's future. It should provide input from merchants and developers as well as the community. I don't know how much the City can help. It is my impression they currently lack the resourcesfor this particular project and are relying on the neighborhood and business community for help.

In the past, many merchants felt that they were not included in the planning process, but over the past year, there appears to have been a change. I think it's a good idea for CAMA and RCPC to work together on issues that mutually affect our community.

For the future, I would like to see small neighborhood businesses stay on College Avenue, much as they are now. I think sole or individual proprietorships like this add character to an area.

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Chabot School Parents Want Solutions To Dangerous Traffic

Inadequate traffic controls, increasing traffic volume, and a recent series of near misses at key intersections near Chabot school — even after one child was struck by a car— have prompted a subcommittee of the Chabot School PTA to seek City assistance to monitor traffic flow and determine the best way to protect schoolchildren.

According to members of the subcommittee, there are three main problem areas:

1. The intersection of Patton and Chabot Road.– This is presently an all–way stop with school–trained student crossing guards during peak school traffic times. The committee feels this intersection is too busy, particularly during the morning commute hours, for present traffic controls.

2. The intersection at Miles and Patton.– There is a crosswalk across Miles at the very mouth of the freeway on–ramp with no additional protection from traffic coming up Patton from Chabot and turning onto the on–ramp. Drivers coming around the curve have little time to react to any pedestrians in the crosswalk. "A booby trap for drivers and pedestrians".

3. The intersection of Broadway and Keith.– More a part of the freeway system than part of the City street system, committee members assert. This gives rise to dangerous driving attitudes which, coupled with inadequate traffic controls, creates an extremely hazardous situation. PTA members say this location, particularly the east crosswalk on Keith Street, has been the site of several scary incidents over the past few months, including one child struck by a car this year, a child on a bicycle struck last year, and several near misses witnessed by parents.

The PTA subcommittee proposes adult crossing guards and other protective measures for these intersections. Your suggestions to the school, parents, the City and to Cal Trans to help prevent a tragedy are encouraged!

To help, call Mr. John Geltmeyer at 655-0434.




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If The World Beats A Path To Your Driveway...

By Ray G. Perman

Locating on–street parking in the Rockridge is becoming more and more difficult; many drivers find themselves pressured to parallel park in spaces too short to accommodate their vehicle. Such optimistic parking frequently results in blocked driveways that are difficult or impossible to navigate.

According to Officer Don Foster of the Oakland Police Department Traffic Division, the California Vehicle Code, Section 22500–E, prohibits the stopping, standing, or parking of a vehicle in a public or private driveway.

The driveway area that must be kept clear extends from where the top of the curb first dips toward the pavement to the point at the other side of the driveway where the curb regains its normal height. Although it is a parking courtesy to leave extra clearance next to a driveway, the practice is not required by law.

If someone's car blocks the required clear area of your driveway, you may call the OPD at 273–3481 to have the vehicle cited. Officer Foster added that as long as you are able to maneuver your car around the offending vehicle, the department cannot tow.

OPD will respond to your complaint as soon as is practical. The responding officer will issue a citation to the offending vehicle and make a reasonable effort to locate the driver. If no driver is found, the officer may order the vehicle towed. According to Officer Foster, the procedure usually takes between an hour and a half to two hours after the complaint is received. The name of the complainant will be listed on the police report.

Although an officer may legally issue a citation to any vehicle blocking a driveway at any time — even your own! — department policy is to respond only to complaints from driveway users/owners.

Because the width of most Oakland driveways is barely adequate to accommodate today's vehicles, the City Office of Public Works offers a program called "Driveway Tipping". For a fee of $46.15, a City crew will paint a three foot length of curb (longer, if deemed necessary) on each side of your driveway with the famous "no parking" red paint. Any vehicle parked along the red "tip" may be cited — courtesy becomes law.

Phone the Office of Public Works at 273–3466 to arrange this service, but make your call soon — this program is threatened by the City's projected deficit.

Do not be tempted to paint driveway "tips" on your own: the police will only cite cars parked in officially "tipped" driveway areas.

NEXT MONTH: *Your driveway Renovation and the City of Oakland.*

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Of General Interest:

A New Year, An Unpleasant Task

by Marge Gibson–Haskell

The start of the calendar New Year reminds us that it is only six months until the commencement of the next fiscal year. It is the time when the people of the City, through their elected representatives, must make the agonizing dollar decisions which define our quality of life in Oakland.

This past year we barely maintained ourselves by taking advantage of one–time revenue sources, but we nevertheless suffered substantial budget blows. Some of these made the news — headlines proclaimed that Alameda County will receive reduced revenues to fight drugs next year, which will impact our police vice units. Some didn't make the news. No one took note of the County of Alameda Solid Waste Management Committee decision ending cash payments to the City derived from the San Francisco garbage stream flowing into Altamont. Many major sources of funds such as state bailout funds and Federal revenue sharing also were phased out.

Prior to the passage of Proposition 13, property taxes provided 70% of general fund revenues. Today they provide less than 30%. As has been detailed above, we have lost the offsetting funds that were provided by other sources. The net effect of all changes, when matched with the desire to maintain current service levels, is a projected deficit of at least $12 million.

We will, as we have since the passage of Proposition 13 ten years ago, make such cuts as we can find that will not impair service delivery. But this year these won't produce a balanced budget! Much more revenue is needed, or, far greater cuts will have to be made.

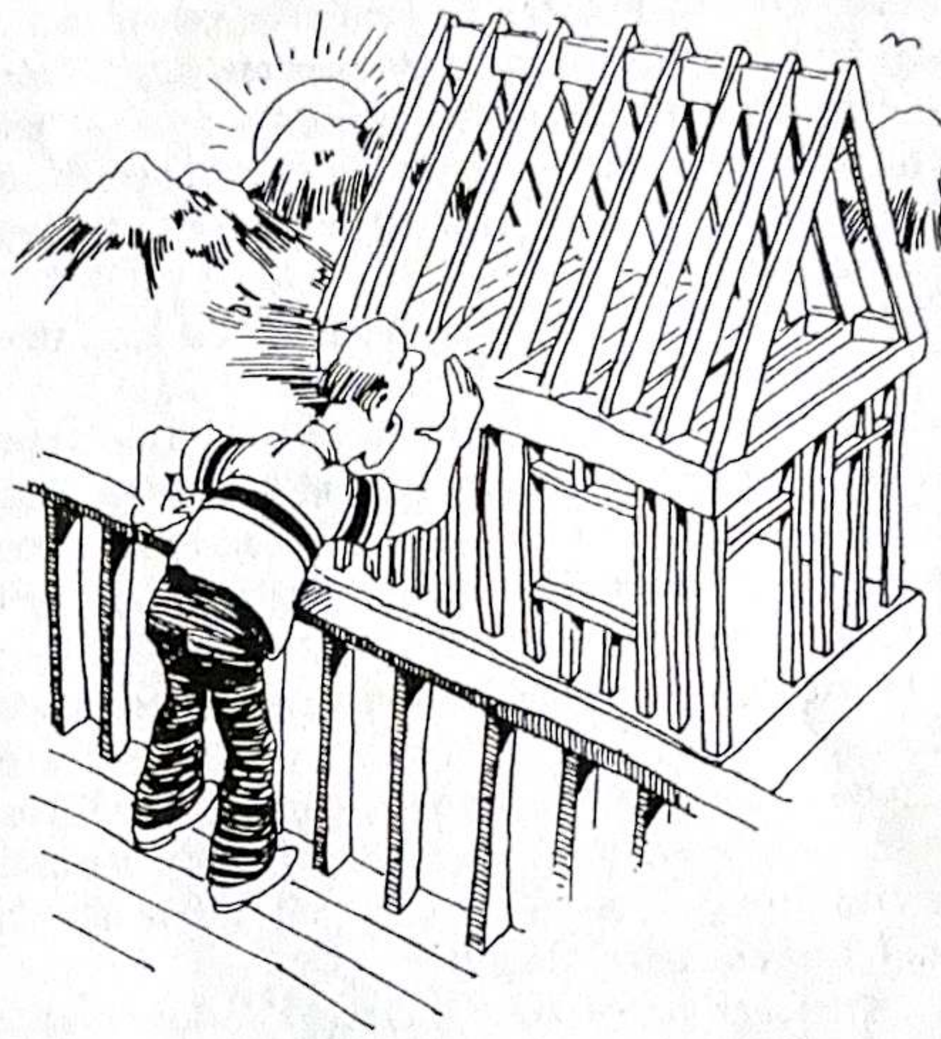
At the Rockridge Community Planning Council meeting of January 20, [7:30 pm, College Avenue Presbyterian Church] City staff and I will detail alternatives. We will outline what a cut of $12 million will do to the City's budget and what potential revenue increase options are available.

None of these will be pleasant, but as a community, we are being given choices. If you wish to question, consider and recommend, please come to that meeting.

RCPC and ***The Rockridge News*** *present this column to assist regular communication from local officials. Give some thought to what you read here, then give a call:*

Marge Gibson-Haskell – 273-3266
City Council District 1

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Tech Students Visit Washington, D.C.

Twenty–five students from Oakland Technical High School participated in the Closeup Foundation one–week excursion to Washington, D.C. during the week of December 7–12.

The students spent the week exploring U.S. domestic policies and politics and relating their experiences to what they have learned in their government and U.S. history classes.

Rockridge Soccer Club Plans Annual Meeting

The Rockridge Soccer Club will hold its annual meeting Monday, February 8, 1988, 7:30 pm at Chabot Elementary School Auditorium.

The Club will adopt By–Laws and elect new officers for 1988–89. Call Mr. Bruce Friend at 658–1803 for additional information.

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St. Albert's Offers Concert, Contemplation

Founder of Sweet Honey in the Rock Brings Concert–Lecture to Priory

Bernice Johnson Reagon, founder and leader of the five–woman a capella singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock, will present her concert–lecture of Black American traditional song at Saint Albert's Priory on Monday evening, January 25th at 7:30 pm.

Director of the Smithsonian's Black American Culture Program, Ms. Reagon presented a similar concert–lecture at the Oakland Museum in July 1987 as part of the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibits. Her dual role as musician–historian developed from singing in the choir at her father's Baptist church and her subsequent studies at Spelman College in Atlanta.

Because of limited seating, reservations are suggested at $5 per ticket (pre–paid). Tickets at the door are $8.

Call Father George Matanic, 654–5725 for tickets or further information.

Private Retreats Available At St. Albert's

Saint Albert's Priory is making a number of rooms available throughout the year on weekdays and weekends for private retreats for men.

Retreatants set the pace and tone of their own retreat, blending their own time for quiet, rest and prayer, and are invited to join the community of friars for prayers and daily Eucharist. A spiritual director or confessor is available upon request.

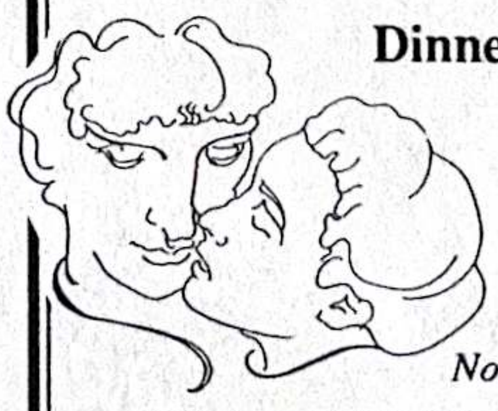
To schedule a retreat date or for further information, contact Father George Matanic at the Priory or call 654–5725.

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College Avenue Presbyterian Church Presents English Theatre Company

Come see the premiere Christian professional theatre company in England, the *Riding Lights*, performing at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue (658–3665) at 7:00 pm Wednesday, January 27th. A free–will offering will be taken.

This theatre company has won acclaim not only from church audiences throughout England and Europe, but also from many theatre critics.

The company's productions include: tours of St. John's Gospel, a musical Daniel, several recordings for the BBC and award–winning reviews from the Edinburgh Festival. Paul Burbridge is their artistic director.

We welcome our Rockridge Community to this viewing treat, which will be followed by a "get–acquainted" reception at approximately 8:30 pm.

Cordially,

Pastor Bill Beatty

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The Rockridge News is published monthly in Oakland except in August under sponsorship of The Rockridge Community Planning Council.

Got something planned you'd like to have ***The Rockridge News*** *tell about? Call Don Kinkead at 655-7474 or write to 5626 Oak Grove Avenue, Oakland 94618 (of course!) and let us know.*

☛ ***February issue deadline is February 6th.***