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THE Rockridge News

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RCPC General Meeting Agenda

Thursday, March 16, 2000, 7:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College Avenue (at Manila)

■ **Study: Expanding the Caldecott Tunnel**

The March 16 RCPC General Meeting will be devoted to the Route 24/Caldecott Tunnel Corridor Study. A representative from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) will give a presentation to the Rockridge community on the same topics presented at the March 1 public meeting hosted by MTC, and then the meeting will be opened for public questions/comment. Representatives from other transit and environmental organizations will also be present to answer questions.

The RCPC Board is devoting the March meeting to the Hwy. 24 study because a date was not finalized for the MTC-sponsored meeting prior to the February *Rockridge News* press date. A tentative and incorrect date was printed, seriously compromising our organiza-

See "Meeting," page 3

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Caldecott Study to Get Airing At March RCPC General Meeting

At the first public meeting focussed on the Caldecott Tunnel Corridor Study, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Contra Costa officials, and the study consultants presented a range of background material and proposals to a mostly Contra Costa audience on February 24. The meeting format was mainly informational, with few details on options. The comparable Alameda County meeting scheduled for March 1

See "Caldecott," page 14

Mayor Defends Measure D In Debate at Rockridge Meeting



◂ School reform Measure D debaters spoke at the RCPC February meeting. Mayor Jerry Brown, at left, School Board candidate Tania Kappner, Boardmembers Dan Siegel and Ken Rice, and Board candidate Kerry Hamill examined the finer points of the proposal.

The Mayor argues he needs to appoint 3 members to the School Board to spur radical change; opponents counter that reforms are already under way

by Cy Gulassa, RCPC Board Member

Although the Fourth of July is still months away, fireworks flared during a panel discussion of school reform Measure D at RCPC's General Meeting February 17.

Mayor Jerry Brown, whose controversial measure would allow him to appoint three members to the School Board, battled with board members Dan Siegel and Ken Rice who strongly support the status quo of seven elected members. The panel also included two candidates for School Board District One, Kerry Hamill, who endorses the measure, and Tania Kappner, opposed. Following are brief summaries of their

See "Debate," page 15

The Rockridge News Seeks Writers

The Rockridge News is looking for writers and a co-editor to assist in the production of a prize-winning community publication. This is a great opportunity to gain experience, build a portfolio, meet neighbors and have fun working with an all-volunteer staff. While knowledge of journalism and editing are welcome, staff is willing to train applicants. Writers meet at Spasso Coffee Shop, 6021 College, 10a.m. to noon, on the Sunday following publication of *The Rockridge News*. Next meeting, April 9. Please send a brief letter of interest to: Editor, Rockridge News, PMB 130, 5856 College Avenue, Oakland, 94618, or call 428-9130 for more information.

book corner by Gay Ducey Children's Librarian



Photo: Chris Ahlstrand

Happy Trails

On my eighth birthday I received the two best presents of my life: a complete cowgirl outfit with a little red hat, a fringed skirt, spurs, a belt with plastic bullets and two six-shooters, and tickets to the Houston Rodeo and Fat Stock Show, featuring Dale Evans and Roy Rogers! My heroes, especially Dale. She didn't stay home flipping flapjacks; she rode right alongside Roy and could rope better than he could. I wanted to be a cowboy, just like they were. I took riding lessons at the Almeda Riding Stables and pretended that the sad little pony lashed to the metal spokes was a stallion. The real cowkids there — the kind with worn-out jeans and a cool squint — took a dim view of kids like me, but a tenderfoot has to start somewhere.

We arrived at the rodeo and climbed up to seats so high the rodeo managers should have provided oxygen. The Grand Parade began and we watched rodeo clowns, quarter horses, bulls, and riders. Roy and Dale were at the end: Roy on Trigger, the big Palomino, and Dale on Buttermilk. They swept their hats off as they rode, nodding and smiling. I swept mine off, too.

About the middle of the show, the ringmaster announced a contest for kids. The prize was a ride on Buttermilk with Dale Evans. I was out of my seat and down the steps before I knew what the contest was. When I reached the sawdust ring, I saw a mule restrained by two rodeo clowns. Not a contented animal. Each contestant had to try to ride the mule from one barrel to another one, a short distance away. "That's all?" we said. Well! I was the last kid. The rest were all boys, and I knew the first one would ride that mule and then I'd lose. Number One circled the mule, mounted quickly as if to surprise him, and the mule bucked him off before I could blink. Tough luck. The mule tossed Two and Three, too, and I forgot about the prize and thought, " A person could die down here!" Four began weeping and was led away. It was my turn. I marched smartly to the mule, but before I could mount in a style which reflected the high standards of the Almeda Riding Stables, the clowns picked me up and turned me backwards in the saddle. My God, the embarrassment. That did the trick, for the mule ambled to the far barrel immediately, as he was trained to do.

I did not know I had won, I only knew I had not died, until a rider drew near. And there she was: a goddess. She lifted me into the saddle and put my little hands on the pommel. We rode all around the great ring, and Dale whispered to me, "I always like it when a girl wins."

It wasn't easy to find good role models in the media of the fifties, but Dale Evans was there, roping and ranching with the best of them. She cast a lasso around my heart that remains there today, and perhaps around some of yours, too. Dale is not feeling well these days and it would be a good time for anyone who remembers her fondly to tell her so. The address is: Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Museum, 15650 Seneca Road, Victorville, CA 92392.

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See Community Calendar, page 12 for Library program details.

The Rockridge News

The Rockridge News, founded in 1986 by Don Kinkead, is published monthly in Oakland and is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council, a non-profit public benefit organization founded to: preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood; promote the health, safety and quality of life of its residents; furnish a forum for community involvement, and provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

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Jamie Pearson ..... Writer
Ortrun Niesar ..... The Rockridge Muse
Chris Ahlstrand ..... Photography
Madeleine Alcorta ..... Advertising
Susan Montauk ..... Business Manager (Distribution, Subscriptions)
Don Kinkead ..... Graphics & Layout

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- Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in ***The Rockridge News***?
- Do you have questions about newsletter distribution?
- Would you like to volunteer to be a *Rockridge News* block captain?

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To advertise, call Madeline Alcorta at 594-0388. *(RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate.)*

Meeting: Caldecott

from page 1

tion's ability to properly notify the Rockridge community of this important issue. Clearly the study has progressed to the stage where all of Rockridge needs to start asking serious questions. This is a time when community input to Oakland officials, Alameda CMA, CalTrans, and MTC is extremely important. Please come to the March RCPC General meeting and make your voice heard.

■ Also at the March meeting, there will be a brief presentation by Willie Smith, Rockridge resident and member of Oakland's new Ethics Commission.

Get an introduction to the purpose and workings of this new body which hopefully will help improve the quality of our city government.

ZONING ·Issues·Items·



A photo montage showing the scale and look of CCAC's proposed student housing project at the corner of Broadway Terrace and Broadway, looking toward downtown Oakland on Broadway.

Revised CCAC Student Housing Proposal Presented to Neighbors

by Chad Thompson, RCPC Zoning and Design Review Committee Chair

In response to concerns raised at the Janaury RCPC General Meeting, the development architect presented a revised design of the CCAC student housing project proposed for the corner of Broadway and Broadway Terrace. The revised design provides more "animation" to the sides of the building facing the neighborhood. The design and other issues were discussed at a meeting hosted by Patty Brunn and Fred Womack at their home near the project site. Topics ranged from CCAC's building maintenance practices to sophisticated critiques of the building design. Although concerns about parking, loss of views, and the size and design of the proposed building were not entirely resolved, there was at least a rough consensus that the proposed use of the site was appropriate and better than the status quo.

RCPC does not oppose the project, which is just beginning the approval process with the Oakland planning department, but it hopes to see further refinements as the design matures. For more information contact RCPC at 814-6060 or E-mail chadthom@concentric.net

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RCPC Board Candidates State Qualifications for Office

An RCPC Board Candidates' Forum will be held at the March 16 General Meeting in the Rockridge Library. Come meet the candidates and ask critical questions.

Voting will take place at the April 20 General Meeting and on the following Saturday, April 22, in front of the Rockridge Library from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Frank J. Giunta

Mendocino Avenue



I have lived in Rockridge since 1972. My interests in serving on the RCPC Board are to help leverage the extensive talents and resources in Rockridge to make a big difference in our neighborhood and City. My priorities are:

• Education: help improve Rockridge area schools through citizen initiatives.

• Quality of Life: engage citizens to promote smart growth, open space, green consumption, less congestion, and safe, clean and uncongested streets.

• Interaction: work with other neighborhoods (Temescal, North Oakland and West Oakland) to partner and support their initiatives for community improvement and economic development.

• Image: work with the City and neighborhoods to enhance our local, regional and national image as a caring and progressive community.

Meredith Kaplan

Colby Street

Communities, like relationships, require communication and work. RCPC provides the forum for the Rockridge community to convey its concerns about quality of life issues such as planning, schools, crime, College Avenue character. And RCPC provides each of us the place to work on addressing our concerns. I like participating on the RCPC Board because we tackle these issues and involve the larger community in solving them.

I would like to continue on the Board and encourage all of you to get involved and help us improve the quality of life for our neighbors, our families, and our local merchants. *(No photo available.)*

Susan Montauk

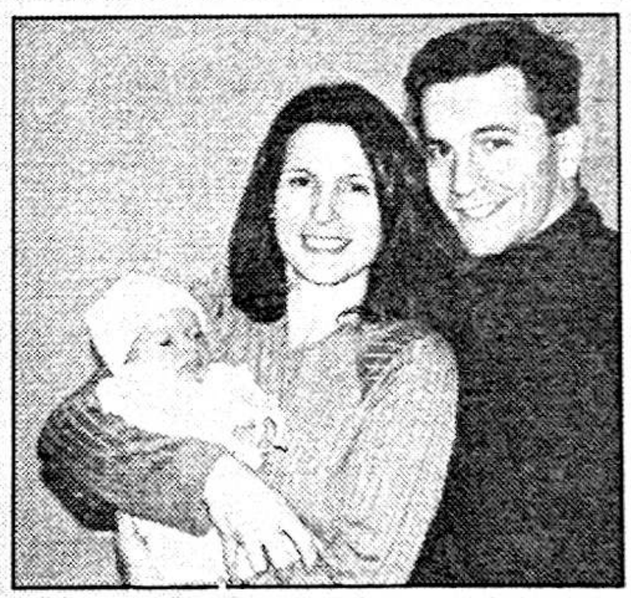
Boyd Avenue



As an RCPC Board-member since 1994, I have had the opportunity to serve our community in many satisfying ways. I have chaired all three presentations of RCPC's major fundraiser — the Rockridge Kitchen Tour — and currently am business manager of *The Rockridge News*.

The greatest strength of Oakland is in its neighborhood organizations. RCPC is fortunate to attract an abundance of community talent to promote its goals. From planning and zoning to public safety and traffic, our voice is heard at City Hall. I hope to continue working with RCPC to help "preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood."

"If Nominated, I Will Coo!"



Rockridge News **book reviewer Jamie Pearson and her husband Rich are the proud parents of new baby Avery Paige, born November 27, 1999. Congratulations Jamie and Rich! (None of the three are candidates for the Board, but Avery seems to have a resolute expression. Who knows about the future?)** *Photo: Susan Montauk*

Cody Ruedaflores

Cavour Street



I recently moved to the Rockridge community from Pasadena with my wife to work with Kaiser Permanente as a State Contract Administrator in Oakland.

I wish to work with RCPC to preserve the heritage of our neighborhood, maintain a safe living environment, provide community outreach, improve recreational and educational resources, and attract businesses. I offer a fresh perspective to the Board to make decisions in the best interest of the Community. I have great project management, negotiation, financial and analytical skills, which will be an asset to the Council and the Rockridge Community.

Chad Thompson

Carlton Street



As chair of the RCPC zoning and design review committee, I have tried to protect and enhance our wonderful neighborhood character. As chair of the RCPC Board, I have tried to support the tremendous effort put forth by the countless volunteers that make RCPC a model of a successful neighborhood organization. With your endorsement I will continue efforts to protect and enhance our quality of life.

Thanks, Nancy! Welcome, Madeline!

by Susan Montauk

The Rockridge News is sad to say good-bye to Nancy Morton, who is completing her last month as Ad Manager. We've been very fortunate to have her expertise at a crucial time when we expanded from 12- to 16-page format in September 1998. She's kept us in the black ever since. A consummate salesperson and community volunteer, Nancy has brought on board a host of new and satisfied advertisers. Happy to meet merchants, she has gone far afield of Rockridge to bring new advertising to the newsletter. She looks forward to staying connected to *The Rockridge News* and is currently busy training her replacement, Madeline Alcorta. She wishes to thank the loyal advertisers for their continued support of RCPC's newsletter.



Photo: Susan Montauk

Madeline Alcorta (left) learns the ins and outs of advertising from present Ad Manager Nancy Morton.

Madeline attended the February meeting of the newsletter's writers with an idea for an article. When she learned we were looking for a new Ad Manager, she volunteered to take on the job. She has been living in Rockridge for a year and a half and works at Barclay's and Ilde.

Her interest in the media began in high school as editor of her school newspaper, and continues at JFK University where she is pursuing a degree in Liberal Arts. Eager to get started, she will be introducing herself to merchants beginning in March. She feels strongly about building community relationships.

We welcome her to *The Rockridge News* staff and look forward to her contribution.

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Rockridge Park Design To Be Displayed at Local Libraries

by Theresa Nelson,
Parks Committee Co-Chair

The Rockridge Park draft Master Plan, unveiled in January, is going through further refinements by the designers and City staff during February and March.

From March 1 through March 15 (possibly a few days more), full-size drawings of the phase one building plans will be on display at the Rockridge Library in the upstairs balcony area. Adjacent to the drawings will be a box for your comments. Plans for the linear park, including details of the children's play area, the color palette and landscaping, will be displayed at the Temescal Library during the same time period. Stop by either location, look at the updated drawings and let the designers know what you think.

According to Janet Hansen, Project Manager for Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation, staff may or may not plan a final meeting on the design. It might be in late March or early April. The DMV has at last agreed to a 5-year easement for the small corner area near the trees to make this part of the Park. However, there is no final decision from the Creek Restoration Program regarding funding for creek-related projects.

Any new meeting dates will be announced in *The Rockridge News*, and at RCPC's website, www.rockridge.org. To get on the mailing list, please contact Janet Hansen at 238-4719.

Watch for future fundraising announcements.

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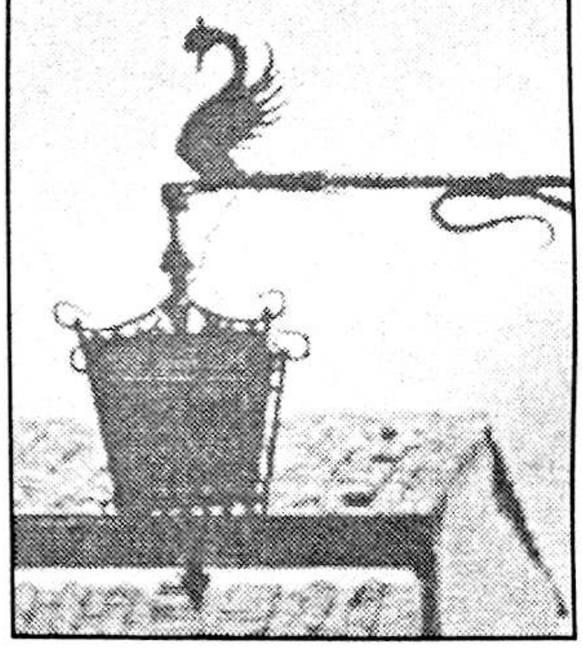
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Dominican Order Celebrates 150th Anniversary of Arrival in California

Rockridge's St. Albert's College hosts concerts to mark the jubilee

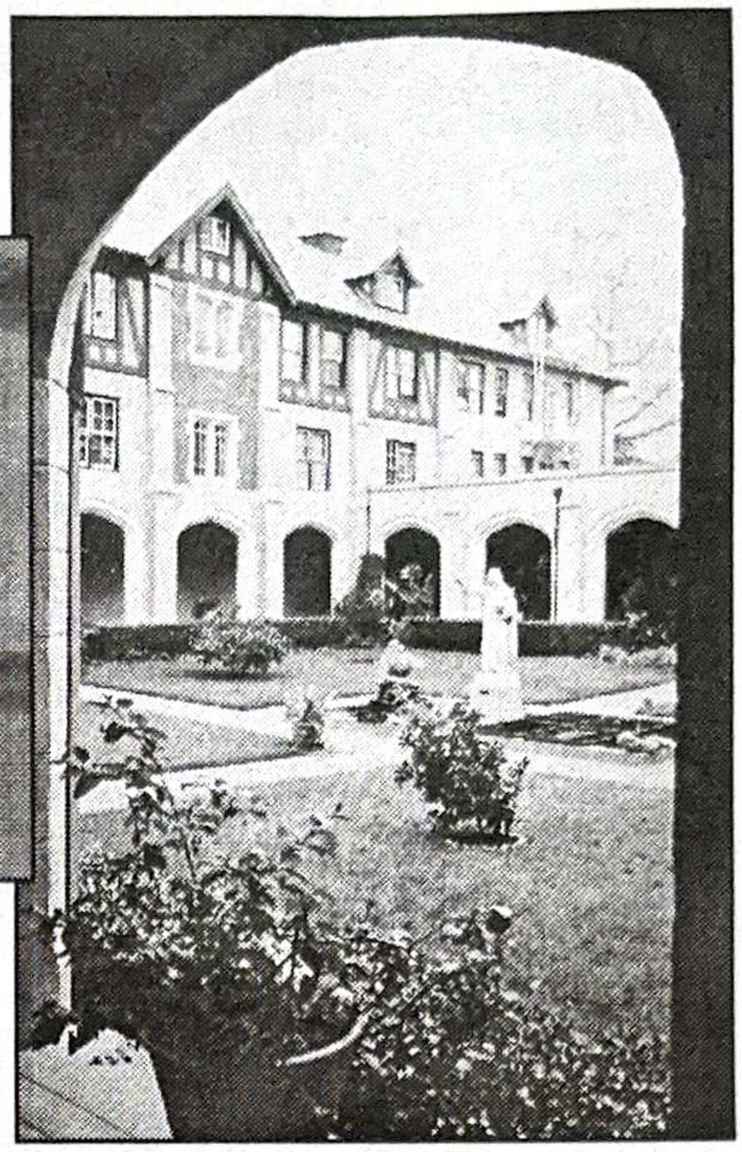
by Rev. Fabian Parmisano, O.P.

The new millennium marks the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Dominicans in California, and the 69th anniversary of the founding of St Albert's College, a five-acre seminary and retreat center located at the cul-de-sac of Birch Court in Rockridge.

It was in the late months of 1850 that Bishop Joseph Alemany and two others voyaged across the Atlantic, trekked through the Isthmus of Panama, sailed up the Pacific and, on December 7th of 1850, landed in San Francisco harbor.

The western Dominicans, members of the 700 year-old Order of Preachers, first settled in Monterey. After three years they moved to Benicia, a more populous center,





Photos: Cy Gulassa

▲ **Prior of St. Albert's, Rev. José Pimentel, O.P.**

▶ **The Cloister at St. Albert's College, Birch Court.**

and from there gradually sent out priests and sisters to all the major cities and towns in the Bay Area and eventually to centers in other western states, including Alaska and Hawaii.

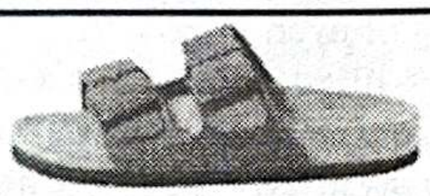
In 1931, to be closer still to San Francisco and the University of California in Berkeley, the Dominicans purchased the Raymond A. Perry estate in Oakland, with its rich variety of flora and a Lake Temescal rivulet running through it, and over the years erected the four wings of the monastery that presently house and educate some 50 Dominican friars. St. Albert's also serves as a sabbatical school for priests, religious, and laypeople throughout the world.

On April 15 of this year, St. Albert's, along with the whole of the western Dominican province, will celebrate the jubilee at a mass in St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco. The Dominican Master General, Very Rev. Timothy Radcliffe, and the Archbishop of San Francisco, Most Rev. William Levada, will officiate. Bishop John Cummins of Oakland and other bishops, priests and religious from across the country will participate in the festivities.

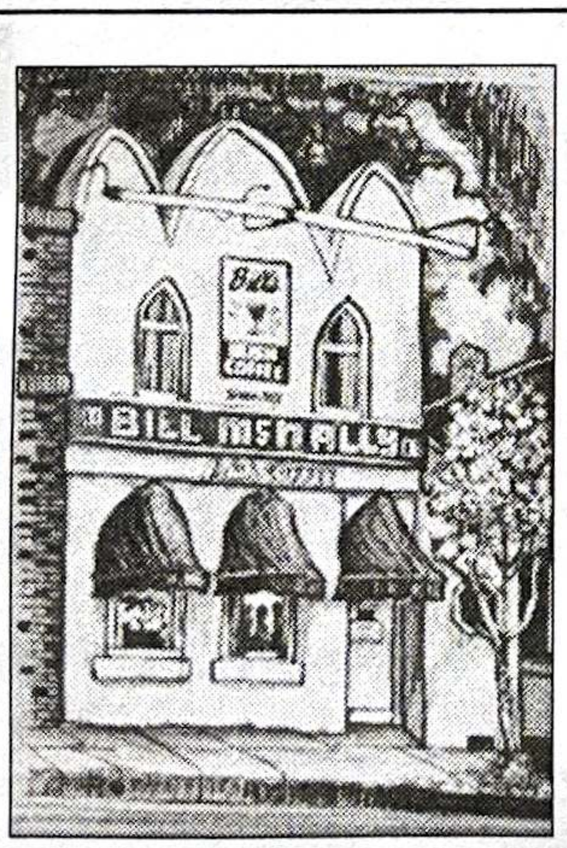
St. Albert's will join the celebration with two fund-raising events and a free concert in its Chapel (6172 Chabot Road), acclaimed for its acoustics. Seating is limited to 200. Call 596-1800 for information and reservations.

St. Albert's Chapel Sesquicentennial Concerts

- Saturday April 1, 7:30 p.m., the SF State Chamber Singers directed by Joshua Haberman. $25 donation. Wine, cheese and fruit reception will follow.
- Saturday, May 20, 7:30 p.m., The Chapel Choir of the Catholic Community at Stanford University. $25 donation. Wine, cheese and fruit reception will follow.
- (Date to be announced) 7:30 p.m., The Piedmont Choirs, a free concert.



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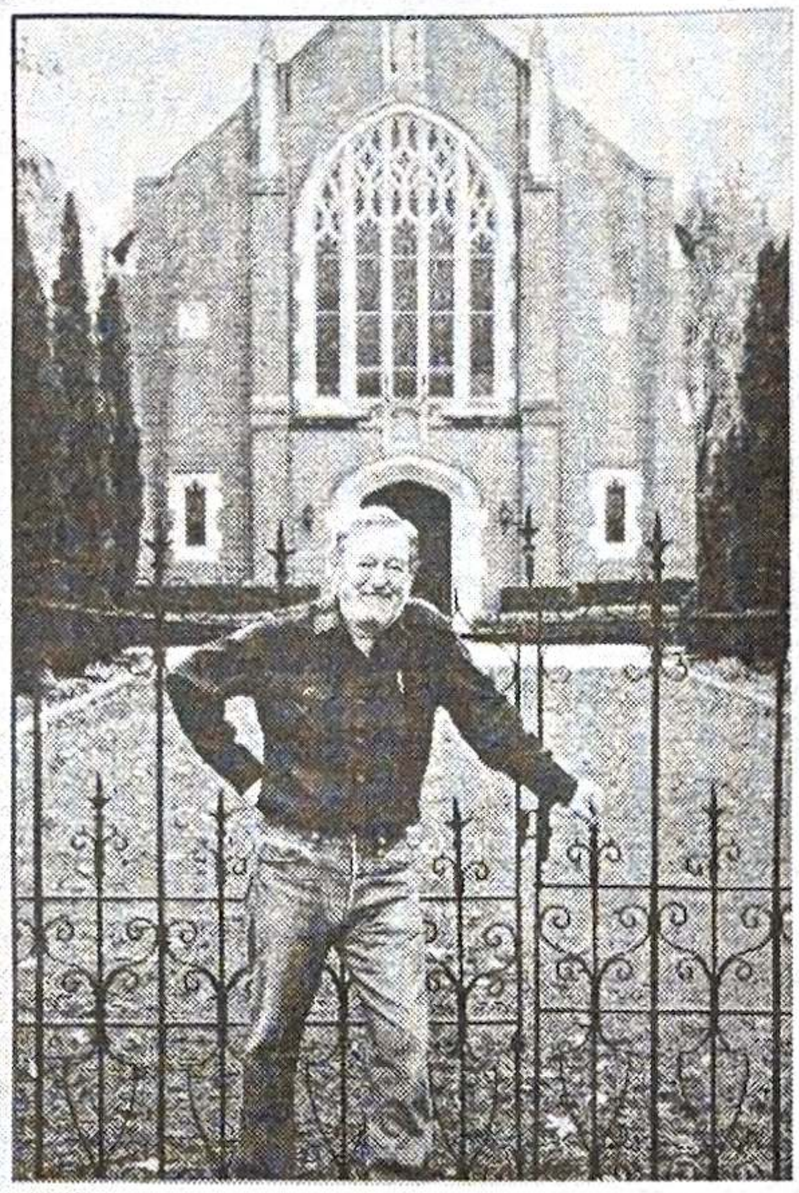


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In the Old Days

St. Albert's in the Old Days



Father O'Rourke in front of St. Albert's on Chabot Road.

We were there to learn how to draw on our own and the church's spiritual and intellectual resources in order to make sense of our own lives.

by Father David O'Rourke

A distinguished scholar reminisces about life in St. Albert's Priory during the seeking-self sixties

Some time during the second week of September in 1958 I moved from Kentfield, in Marin County, to St. Albert's Priory on Chabot Road. I had finished the required year as a Dominican novice in Kentfield, made the beginner's three-year vow of obedience, and was moving to St. Albert's to begin my studies – three years of philosophy and four of theology. In those days St. Albert's was still a combined residence and college, legally distinct functions which were physically separated in 1964 when the Graduate Theological Union was formed and the classes and library moved to Berkeley.

I was then twenty-five years old, short-haired, trim and shiny, and, except for the novitiate year, new to California. So I really didn't know what to expect on the other side of the new San Rafael Bridge. But it didn't take many minutes onto the East Bay landfall to learn that not all California was like Marin County. Other surprises came equally fast. Since I have not lived at St. Albert's for many years, this account is necessarily retrospective and impressionistic.

Shortly after unpacking I decided to pamper myself with an afternoon cup of tea — a forbidden luxury during the novitiate. The entire first floor of the old brick wing is occupied by the refectory, or dining room. Long, oak refectory tables, enough for 125 men, were set around the perimeter. Down at the far end a gaunt, long-limbed man in the black-and-white lay brother's habit was carrying on a full-voiced monologue with the empty room as he wiped off the tops of the tables. He stopped, peered long over his glasses, and definitely down on, the new arrival. Then he went back to tidying up, as though the blank table tops held more interest than anything I could muster.

I was not unaccustomed to the ways of poets, or even to mavericks. William Carlos Williams had been our family doctor. And the only two Californians I knew on my arrival here were not models of reticence. One, a Cal professor, had earlier been fired for refusing to sign the non-Communist oath. And my uncle, a San Francisco labor leader, had the

Continued top of next page

Agatha Rainford
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St. Albert's

from previous page

distinction of being labeled a Communist by Richard Nixon during his 1952 run for Congress. But even in that context Brother Antoninus, or William Everson as he was in lay life, was truly different. He could, and did, wither youthful cant with a glance. Lest there be any doubts, he let us know that our lack of life experiences really did outweigh all and any virtues to which we may have pretended. An eminent poet and outspoken member of San Francisco's Beat Generation, he also became a good friend and mentor, helping turn what could have been years of dry study into a human adventure. For he attracted a fascinating group of off-beat artists and intellectuals among whom I came to feel at home.

Before entering the Dominicans, I had studied philosophy for a couple of years in a seven-hundred-year-old Dominican monastery in Provence, prodded there by Jacques M, who had taught at Yale. My window looked out on Cezanne's Mont St. Victoire, but the phenomenal view was from an unheated and unplumbed room. Tough living. And mixed in with the fabled landscapes and perfumed maquis was an intellectualism as demanding as the life was austere. But it all held together in a satisfying, if not gratifying, union.

From that 13th Century authenticity to 1930s gothic in the midst of Rockridge art nouveau and California *quelconque* was a toss of metaphors — a little like training for an ascent of the Matterhorn at Disneyland. In Paris, during my student days, there had been serious rioting against the government of Guy Mollet. But Berkeley's Free Speech Movement was just talk. It all stopped for the weekend, and a long weekend at that.

Still, the asceticism, while different, proved to be real. Perhaps because of the growing sense that young Californians were entitled to whatever and right now, developing the discipline required for an intellectual and spiritual life became an increasingly isolating task. At least the spartan living conditions at St. Albert's encouraged that effort. The classy look of the grounds and public areas notwithstanding, the Dominican community's living quarters were simple. Relatively small rooms with a sink, Army surplus bed, and scrounged desks, all built on the cheap when money was tight. And trotting down the cold asphalt tile of a long corridor at 2:00 AM to a common bathroom that is better than the Greyhound bus station but not up to a McDonald's is not many people's idea of home. Ditto for the common showers, whose steam is handled by leaving the windows always open, even in January. My dorm at Yale — we called them Colleges — was elegant by comparison.

Today St. Albert's is a residence for Dominican students preparing for ordination and ministry at the Graduate Theological Union, or GTU, in Berkeley. But in 1958 it was still a "house of studies" to use the traditional Dominican description. (We never used the word seminary — much too plebian.) We were there to learn how to draw on our own and the church's spiritual and intellectual resources in order to make sense of our own lives. What use you would put that to could be figured out later. But first came your own sense-making. And that I found much to my liking.

In retrospect they were creative, even stimulating years, when standing out was valued more than fitting in. I don't know what it's like now. You need younger eyes for current realities. But forty years ago it was actually an exciting place.

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Lively Debate Over Bike Lanes on Telegraph Avenue

Cyclists want continuous bike lanes linking downtown Berkeley with downtown Oakland

by Cy Gulassa, RCPC Board Member

With all of the publicity about pollution and knotted traffic, you'd think improving bike safety on a major Oakland street, especially one notorious for bike accidents, would be a no-brainer. Guess again.

At Council-member Jane Brunner's monthly tête-à-tête with constituency February 5 at Peralta School, City engineer Michael Vecchio discussed alternatives for improving bike safety on Telegraph Avenue. These range from "do nothing except post signs asking motorists to share the road with bikes," to creating north and south bike lanes while preserving two car lanes in each direction. The end game is to link up with existing bike lanes on Berkeley's Telegraph Avenue to create a continuous bike highway between the cities.

The Oakland plan is a good start, the majority of speakers said, but is less than perfect. It does provide for bike lanes in both directions, but they periodically disappear at congested intersections, leaving cyclists and autos to merge in a dangerous free-for-all. Clearly, cyclists relish the idea of a straight shot between the cities, but they want safe, continuous lanes. Some even brought their bikes to the audience for rhetorical emphasis.

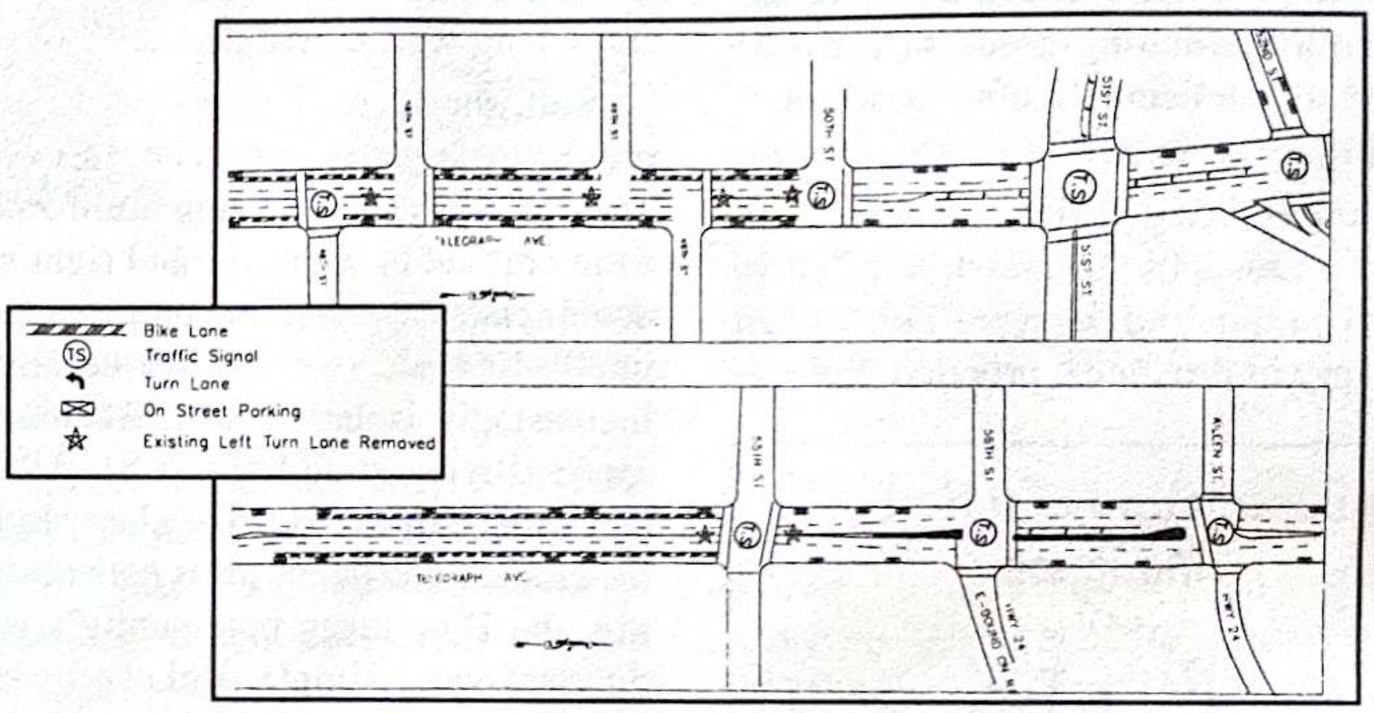
But a vocal minority doesn't want any changes on Telegraph. Bike lanes, they argue, would consume too many parking spaces, bikers would collide with opening car doors, ambulances and fire trucks would have to slow down, merchants would lose foot traffic, cars would bottle up at left turns (six of which, Ms. Brunner pointed out, lead to short, little-used dead-end streets) and motorists would lose a fast artery to downtown (ignoring that the adjacent freeway provides just that). In brief, they want cyclists to use side streets and to leave Telegraph pretty much in its present state of imperfection.

At the end of testimony, Councilmember Brunner said she sensed no consensus. Those favoring bike lanes — the majority of speakers — considered the plan a good start, but want improvements; the minority want bikes banished. Brunner intends to delay taking the issue to City council to provide time for review.

Her priority, she says, "is to make the best decision possible," even if the extra time required means forfeiting a $90,000 striping grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

Waiting for nays and yeas to come together, one participant quipped, "may take up most of the new millenium."

The City map below illustrates how the discontinuous bike lanes would affect existing parking spaces and traffic lanes between 48th and Aileen Streets.



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Spring Onions and Latkes

Spring is an outrageous time of the year: wild, wooly, wonderful and noisy. No, I am not necessarily referring to the Spring Primaries. It's all that noisy energy that manifests itself in nature's crazy dance all around us. It's the pounding rain and the gusting wind. It's crashing branches and rushing creeks. It's the silent noise of ominous storm clouds piled high above the Bay. It's all those other sounds that fill your space as you jog through this neighborhood or that. Above me, cedar waxwings, swinging everywhere in birches and cedars, make a racket rivalling that of our new crosswalk birds. Gulls are noisily perusing schoolyards, looking for left-over lunches; chickens are clucking in a neighbor's driveway; a rooster is crowing somewhere; geese are honking down on Colby. No kidding. With all this ruckus, we know it's Spring. It feels great, and we don't need the politicians!

Readings

At DIESEL, A Bookstore, come hear the sounds of poets and writers as they read their works aloud. DIESEL's offerings are so good, I decided to list them all. Readings start at 7:30 p.m. Call 653-9965 for additional information.

Thurs, March 9; Spectrum: Bay Area Women Writers Debut. Come and hear Kara Gall, Frankie Holtz-Davis, Zinna Riley and Yvette Cancetta Thomas. Come and learn also more about *Taking The Leap*, a popular practicum to help you get started in a creative career.

Fri., March 17: Poet and artist Enrique Martinez Celaya will read from his new

The Rockridge Muse



by Ortrun Niesar

book, *Unbroken Poetry*, and will talk on the relationship of poetry to his art, which is being shown at Rena Bransten Gallery in San Francisco.

Sat, March 25: Scott Savage, Quaker and co-founder for the Center for Plain Living, will read from his new book, *A Plain Life*, a fascinating account of a week-long walk becoming a meditation on slowing down, appreciation of place and community, and authenticity in the plain life.

Thurs., Aril 6: Frances Mayes' reading from her new paperback, *Bella Tuscany*, will surely make this a special evening for all of her admirers.

Conversation

Conversing in another language takes practice that, for adults, is best done in a friendly, non-judgmental environment. A laid-back Spanish conversation group meets every other Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. at DIESEL. It's free and free-form. Come enjoy leader Mark's hospitality. A French group meets Monday mornings for six-week sessions, led by Miriam Misrach. There is a fee involved in this one. Call DIESEL at 653-9965 for details.

Book Clubs

Thinking of joining one? Or forming your own group? Once again, DIESEL is the place to find information and assistanc. Amy McCurdy, a writer herself, will be glad to meet with you to discuss which books might make good book club choices. You can reach her at DIESEL. The bookstore also sponsors two on-going book groups.

Book Signings

On March 23, Cody's will host a book signing for Rockridge resident and author Elizabeth Fischel's fourth book, entitled *Reunion, The Girls We Used To Be, The Women We Became*, published by Random House. Congratulations Elizabeth! Elizabeth will also be at the Rockridge Library on Sunday afternoon, March 26.

Call to Artists

The City of Oakland has another $10,000 commission to award for the design and execution of a new mural for the Fruitvale Plaza Park. Competition is open to all artists of San Francisco and Alameda Counties. Deadline is March 30, 2000. Call 238-6239 for more information.

Update on Rockridge 2000, a Pictorial Essay

Several photographers have expressed interest in participating in creating a pictorial essay documenting life in Rockridge in 2000. Great! We're gonna do it. Anyone interested in joining us, please call me at 849-5310.

Allen Stross of the Berkeley Historical Society will be giving a workshop on Landmarks, Landscapes and Light on March 18 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 pm. Call 848-0181 for more on this. Allen is a master photographer and board member of BHA.

House Tours and Lectures

BAHA and OHA are beginning their Spring lecture series and planning their May house tour. Please call Oakland Heritage Alliance (763-9218) or Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (841-2242) for complete information.

To Reach the Muse

Call me at 849-5310 or e-mail me at oniesar@aol.com.

Deadline for announcements is the tenth of each month.



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Submit Items To RCPC COMMUNITY CALENDAR, 5856 College Avenue, #130, OAKLAND 94618 or call 814-6060.

Boy Scout Troop 274

70th Anniversary Reunion/Celebration, March 12, at 5:00 p.m. at the Colombo Club. For information and reservations call Kathleen Guevara at 428-0439. To volunteer your time call 654-3975.

California College of Arts and Crafts 5212 Broadway, 551-9210

Mar 23, 7 p.m.: Textile Department Lecture Series: Louise Bérubé.

April 15-May 6: Olive Art Center Exhibition: Capp Street Project: Jim Hodges

Claremont Middle School

Looking for teachers or other professionals to provide after-school enrichment programs for GATE (gifted and talented) students. Areas of interest are drama, science and journalism. If you would like to hold workshops or classes for 6th, 7th or 8th graders in any of these areas, or to assist a teacher, please contact Ms. Harris, Assistant Principal at 879-2010, or e-mail: mharris@ousd.k12.ca.us. Claremont Middle School is located on College next to the Rockridge BART Station.

College Avenue Adult Activities Center

College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5955 College Ave.
All activities Wednesdays, 11-noon. Lunch follows, $1.75.
Slide shows (SS) in Lighthouse Room.
Mar.8: Tai Chi demonstration
Mar.15: Video "Spike Jones"
Mar.22: Storytelling-audience participation
Mar.29: Video "Prohibition"
Apr.5: (SS) "Mexico/Copper Canyon", Charlie Fitch

Jane Brunner

Community Advisory Meeting

Saturday, Mar, 4 10:00 a.m.-12 noon at Peralta Elementary School, 460 63rd Street. 10 a.m.-Neighborhood Concerns, 10:45 a.m.-Discussion with Mayor Brown.

The Junior League Of Oakland East Bay

"Phoenix" House and Garden Tour, April 8, 2000 from 11am to 4pm, with proceeds benefiting organizations whose focus is Children at Risk. Five fabulous post-1991 Oakland Hills fire homes will be showcased on this tour. These are inspiring examples of how this Oakland neighborhood has risen from the ashes! The event begins at the Montclair Recreation Center, 6300 Moraga Avenue. Guests will receive maps to the homes located primarily in the Rockridge area. Admission is $20 per person in advance, and $25 on the day of the event. Reservations: mail checks payable to JLOEB Home Tour c/o Cherie Soza, 173 Clyde Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94598. For more information, visit the League website at www.jloeb.org.

NCPC Meetings

Methodist Church, Manila/College. Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council meets 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the. Public invited.

Rockridge Branch Library

Storytimes:

- Toddlers: 10:30 am Saturdays, March 4, 11, 18, 25
- Preschool: 10:30 and 11:00 am Tues, March 7 and 21
- Pajama story hour: 7:00 pm Weds, March 8 and 22

Lawyers in the Library:

Free advice 6-8 pm, 1st Thursday of each month. Signup starts at 5:00 pm.

New Book Discussion Group

A book discussion group focussing on other times and places will meet at Rockridge Library on 5 Thursday nights, 7-9 pm, April 13 through June 29. For more information or to register and get the reading list, call the Library at 597-5017 by Thursday, March 30. Leon Ginsky, who has been facilitating book discussion groups since 1974, will provide background information and guide the discussions.

Secular Humanists of The East Bay (SHEB)

Discussion group March 5, 7 p.m. at the Rockridge Public Library. SHEB is a lively group of individuals who identify themselves as secular humanist, humanists, atheists, agnostics, freethinkers, skeptics, and other names related to their many and varied interests and philosophical convictions.

We share beliefs in free speech, democratic institutions which respect minority rights, separation of church and state, and the need to live in this world and to look to human experience and abilities to solve human problems.510/486-0553, or: eastbayhumanists.org



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A few of the fifty friends who came to Ocean View to tell Charlie (the big guy in the middle) and Trish (to his right), thanks, good luck and goodbye. New Rockridge neighbors Joyce and Brian Jones are to Charlie's left. *

Farewell to Trish West

Rockridge News writer and her husband move to Mendocino

What? Trish and Charlie West moving to Mendocino?" "Impossible!" "They're too young to retire." "Somebody talk them out of it!" "What's going to happen to *The Rockridge News*?"

That's how the RCPC board of directors reacted during a recent meeting when it got the news. And with good reason. For a long time, Trish has been the brawn and brain of RCPC's monthly publication, *The Rockridge News*.

Since starting with the *The Rockridge News* in 1987, Trish has published over 300 articles on topics from mayoral debates to interviews with celebrities. But her specialty was College Avenue. She monitored activity along the commercial strip and introduced business owners to the community through her popular column, "The Neighborhood Merchant," written with elegance, wit and style. Shop owners frequently asked for interviews, but Trish declined, basing her choices instead on feeling and intuition. "I write best about things that appeal to me. I don't want to be a professional promoter, grinding out pieces in alphabetical order according to formula."

Trish did a lot more than write great articles. As copy editor she was the undisputed master of correct spelling and punctuation, able to spot a typo or a misplaced hyphen even on a fourth-generation fax. Although she stepped down as co-editor several years ago, staff could always count on her as emergency backup. Her enthusiastic, "Sure, love to help you!" was as thrilling to an overworked staff as any line out of Shakespeare.

When 5,500 copies of the *The Rockridge News* showed up each month at Julie Dewey's house on Chabot, Trish was there, helping to break down the stacks for distribution and mail copies to subscribers. At monthly meetings of the Neighborhood Newsletter Task Force, she was also there with a fresh batch of home-baked cookies, helping newcomers to learn the craft. She wrote voluminously for many Bay Area publications, among them *The Agenda*, *The MacArthur Metro*, *Temescal News*, *Oakland News*, *The Monclarion*, *The Phoenix Journal* and the Oakland Chamber of Commerce newsletter. And, as if that's not enough, in 1995 she founded and has published *Neighborhood Notes*, a newsletter for the residents in the Ocean View, Margarido, Manchester, and Alpine Terrace area. She hopes a replacement editor from the area will soon volunteer.

The Neighborhood Merchant



by Trish West

Farewell, Trish. Many Thanks!

So last Sunday, about fifty friends visited their home on Ocean View for one last Valentine's day party, a glass of wine and lingering goodbyes. And if there were any doubts about whether they really intended to move, the fact that the rooms were stripped of furniture and that Charlie's prized books were boxed was pretty convincing evidence.

Good luck, Trish and Charlie, and thanks for all the talent and hard work. And yes, thanks for the memories.

— RCPC Board of Directors

** Also pictured with the Wests and the Jones' are, to Charlie and Trish's right, her cousin Sarah Jane Parrott and friend Pavel Pogodin. To the left of the Jones' are Bobbie and Don Kinkead and, in front, Harriet Gulassa. Photo by Cy Gulassa*

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ROCKRIDGE CRIME REPORT

Reach Rockridge community policing Officer J. Watson by paging her 1:00-11:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, at 330-4539; at the tone, enter your return phone number. Officer Watson urges residents not to hesitate to report suspicious activity to the police using the non-emergency number, 777-3333. Suspected crimes in progress should be reported using 911.

Muggings

Rockridge community policing officer Watson reports that on Wednesday, January 26, around 10:30 p.m., two pedestrians were robbed at gunpoint on Oak Grove near College. The suspect, described as a black male, age 25-30, 5'9", wearing dark clothes, fled in a waiting vehicle. These may be the same individuals responsible for three other robberies on dark side streets.

On January 15, around 6:00 p.m., an armed robbery on the 400 block of Hudson was reported to the police.

Residential Burglaries

Three burglaries reported to police: January 13, Cavour near Miles; January 18, Clifton near Claremont; February 2, 5300 block of Lawton Ave.

Assault

A resident reports that at 8:30 a.m. Friday, February 4, a woman was assaulted on the 300 block of 62nd Street (between College and Hillegass). The victim told the resident who responded to her yell for help that she had been grabbed from behind by a man who told her, "You're coming with me." A witness gave chase and got the handbag back. The victim related that her assailant was in his 20s, about 5'7", and was possibly Hispanic.

Home Invasion in Neighboring Community

The Oakland Tribune reports that on Tuesday, February 8 at 8:45 a.m., a 70-year-old woman was tied up and robbed at her home on Broadway Terrace. Police believe the robber entered the home through a rear door the woman had left unlocked after having come inside a few minutes earlier. The police say that there have been no similar robberies in the area. The assailant was described as an African-American male, 30 to 35, about 6'2", between 180 and 190 pounds, and clean-shaven with a dark complexion. He was wearing a black jacket, blue jeans, brown shoes, a black knit cap and black knit gloves. Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call police at 238-3426.

Car Break-ins

On Wednesday, February 9, a caller reported having observed a car break-in on Presley Way near Miles at around 1:45 p.m. The suspect was described as a black male, 6' tall with a large build and a clean-shaven head.

On Thursday, February 18, a van was broken into on the 1600 block of Harwood Avenue.

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Caldecott

from page 1

could not be reviewed at our press time. The study will conclude by June, 2000, with possibly three more public meetings. Final study recommendations will be passed to the California Transportation Commission.

Presently, costs of a new bore and possible funding sources are undetermined. CalTrans' preliminary estimate is $130-150 million, the study consultant comes in at $200 million so far, and the Sierra Club claims $300 million. MTC's figure should be finalized in the coming months. State funds and local sales taxes are likely funding sources. The bore is definitely the largest capital item under consideration in the study.

MTC's proposal falls into three main packages: operations/HOV, bus/BART, and a new Tunnel bore. Operations items include improvements to arterials bisecting and intersecting Hwy. 24, metering on-ramps in off-peak direction, and relocation of merges near the Tunnel. No specifics were presented as to arterial "improvement," or metering. The HOV option could include converting shoulders to carpool and bus use.

Bus/BART improvements include expanding BART parking, feeder bus service to BART stations, employee shuttles, and possible peak hour bus service through the Tunnel. Few specifics were presented. Adding a bore of 2 or 3 lanes would produce a permanent Tunnel configuration of 4 lanes eastbound (towards Contra Costa) and 4 or 5 lanes westbound (towards Alameda County). This represents NO new lanes for commuters heading to Contra Costa in the evening, the "main" commute traffic. "Counter-commute" vehicular traffic, with lower volume, would most benefit from a new bore, as would weekend traffic. No projections of traffic volumes along Hwy. 24 with a new bore in place were presented. No environmental mitigations are being considered at this point.

A wide range of options is being considered and no public input has guided the choices. MTC and our elected officials need to hear our opinions and answer our questions. Please attend the March RCPC General Meeting and find out more about this important study.

Schools Debate

from page 1

responses to questions submitted by the Rockridge audience.

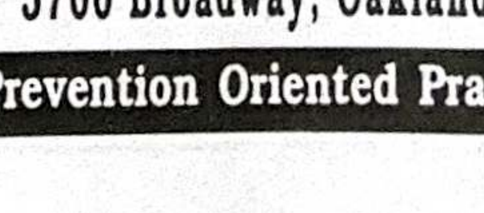
"The system is broken," said Mayor Brown. "You can't fix it by just putting a new speedometer on it. It demands a radical overhaul." He cited bad leadership, weak principals, no accountability, no follow-through, and until recently, a School Board that was unable or unwilling to do anything. While agreeing that the system needs more resources, he said it should have done a lot better with the money it got. He dismissed 1970s style activism as a means of reform because we are in a "conservative, tepid age, and the eleven-volume Education Code makes the system as rigid as the Soviet Union." Only the "shock treatment of political pressure will produce real, sustainable reforms." He promised to appoint "people of intelligence, integrity and commitment who will do a better job of keeping the board focused on serving students." He dismissed arguments that appointing board members deprives citizens of the right to vote. "If the people want Measure D, they have to vote for it. What could be more democratic?" While he supports collective bargaining, he deplored the obsession of the teachers union with obsolete ideology and a "command and control" mindset that leads it to oppose innovations like charter and magnet schools.

Board member Dan Siegel countered that Measure D is not only anti-democratic, it is redundant because the school board right now has a majority of four committed to reforms like firing the superintendent, appointing an interim, authorizing the FCMAT study, developing a facilities plan and, in spite of the Mayor's opposition, hiring Superintendent Chaconas. This new majority is working to eradicate the old, racist view of OUSD as a system that serves "a bunch of low-income black and Latino kids who won't learn much anyway so you don't have to pay much attention to them." The district has been exploited, he said, "by those who see it as a great place for adults to find easy jobs and hand out contracts to friends." To change this, the School Board needs the support of the public, "but we don't need three more guys appointed by the Mayor." While he wants to work with the unions, Siegel believes the current leadership is so reactionary and divided that it alienates the majority of teachers who want more progressive change.

Board member Ken Rice agreed with Siegel and added to the accomplishments of the new board majority, including site-based selection of principals, doubling the number of charter schools, increasing the salaries of principals to be competitive county-wide, and hiring a deputy superintendent in charge of facilities. Since there were over twenty well-qualified applicants for the job of Superintendent, he thinks the reputation of OUSD "can't be that bad." He's putting great stock in the ability of Superintendent Chaconas to continue the thrust of reform and thinks a better campaign to publicize improvements would enhance OUSD's image.

Kerry Hamill, School Board Candidate for District One, said, "The people of Oakland demand change. Voters elected Brown because they see him as a powerful political force and agent for change." She wants to take advantage of that influence to create a very specific, well-articulated reform plan that's easy for the public to understand and measure. "Reform has to come from the political side of the Board, it can't come from the superintendent alone, especially since superintendents don't seem to last very long in Oakland and board members come and go." She wants a plan that's consistent and coherent and as easy to read as a report card. "The Rockridge Library shows what a miracle people can do. OUSD has to be our next miracle."

Backed by the Oakland teachers union, School Board candidate Tania Kappner says Measure D is part of the Mayor's plan to take over the city. "We don't need mayors to tell us how to fix schools," she said. "Our plan is simple. Just fight for more resources and take control so they're used for supplies in the classroom and doing things that work." She is strongly opposed to charter schools and other "union-busting strategies." She is confident that activist board members like her can mobilize the community and bring accountability to the system without Measure D, and that unions historically have been a positive force for change.



Beatrice Kinkead Blanchard

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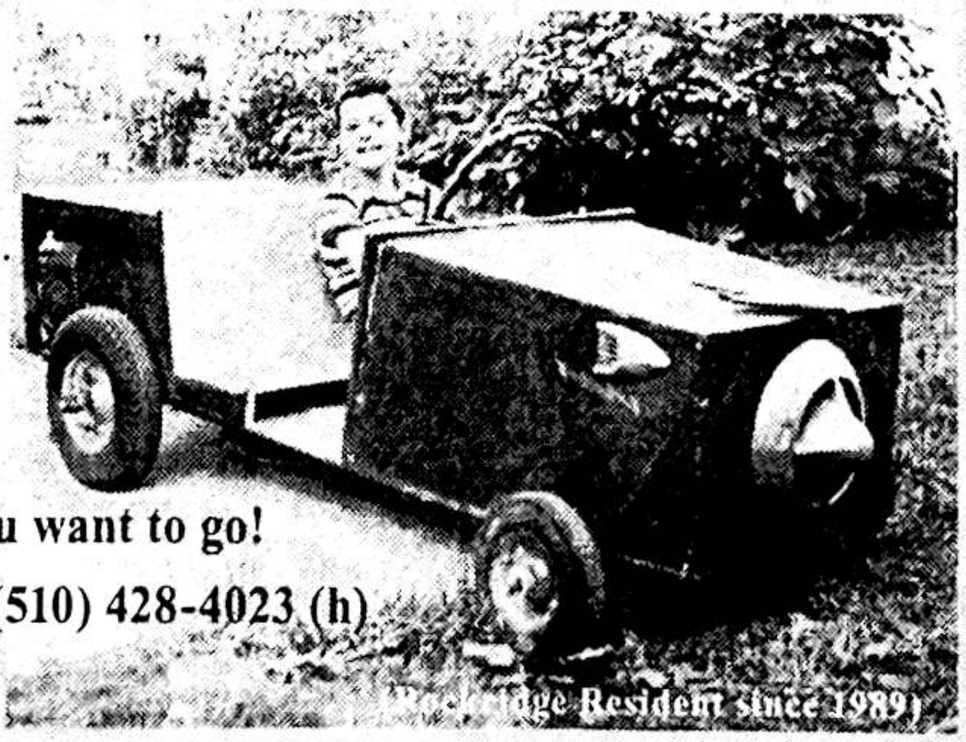
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