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# THE Rockridge News

Remember! No Newsletter, No Meeting in August

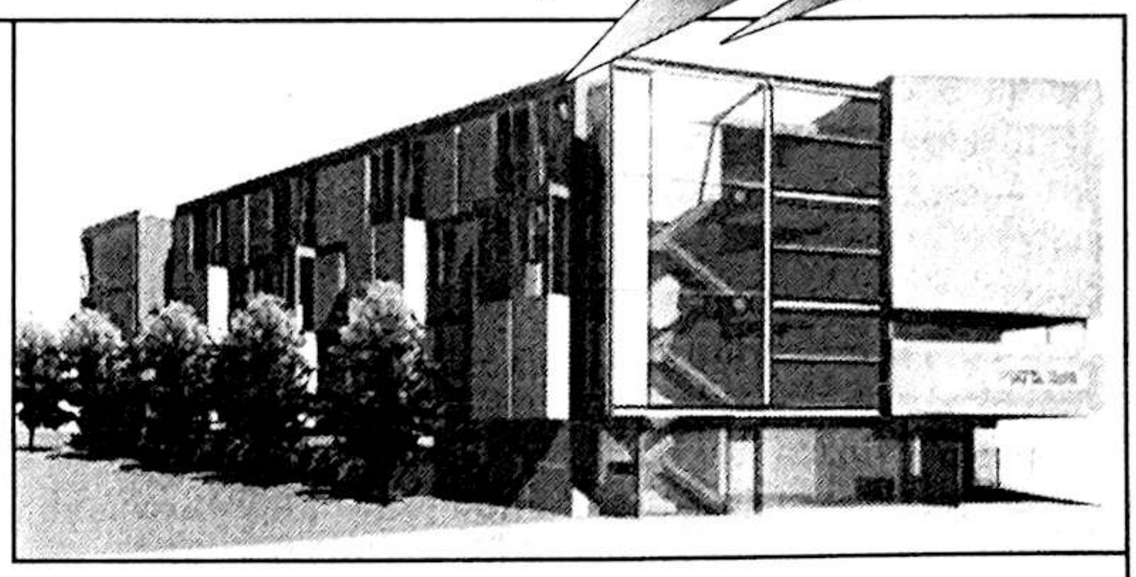
VOL. 15 • NO. 7 • ISSUE NO. 159 • JULY 8, 2000 CIRCULATION: 5,300 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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# Storm Over the Dorm

**Neighbors, the Project Manager and RCPC express views on CCAC's proposal to build a 126-student dorm at Clifton and Broadway**

*The California College of Arts and Crafts says it has run out of room on its Broadway & College campus. To offset the steep rise in rents and to house freshmen close to where most of their classes are taught, the College proposes to build a new 126-student dorm and 38-car parking facility on a triangular lot at Clifton and Broadway owned by the college. When the proposal was unveiled at the January RCPC general meeting, the "storm over the dorm" began, prompting a flurry of meetings, articles, letters, and design changes. The project is now heading toward a hearing before the Oakland Planning Commission. Below are arguments for and against, and an explanation why RCPC does not oppose the project. — Editor*



**CCAC proposes a combined dormitory and parking structure to house 126 students and 38 cars to be located at the intersection of Broadway, Clifton, and Broadway Terrace. The rendering above shows the building as it might appear looking east from Broadway near Clifton.**

## No: The Case Against The Proposed CCAC Dormitory/Parking Structure

***by Patty Brunn, Spokesperson, College Point Neighbors***

Most of the residents near the proposed CCAC dormitory and parking facility believe that the project as currently planned should not be approved. Objections are based on the following quality of life concerns: parking, traffic, noise and litter, and aesthetics.

*See "CCAC Project: No," page 6*

## Yes: Art Students Struggle to Find Affordable Housing

***by Pam Kinzie, Project Manager***

Having been a venerable member of the Rockridge community since 1907, the California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC) now faces the problem everyone else is facing: the cost of housing is skyrocketing. Students are being priced out of the market! Unlike homeowners who "fix" their housing cost at the time of purchase, renters experience increases annually.

*See "CCAC Project: Yes," page 7*

## Not Opposed: Why RCPC is Not Opposed To the CCAC Project

***by Chad Thompson, RCPC Zoning and Design Review Committee Chair***

Since its inception, the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) has worked to preserve and enhance the character of our neighborhood. Many of our most visible battles have been in opposition to serious threats, such as the Cigarettes Cheaper store and the out-of-scale, out-of-character Dreyers project. Generating energy to fight a "clear

*See "CCAC Project: RCPC," page 9*

## RCPC General Meeting Agenda

**July Meeting Cancelled; No Meeting In August**

## RCPC Board Has Vacancies to Fill

Applicants are sought to fill several vacancies on the Board of Directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), now in its 29th year of community leadership.

Serving is a great way to contribute to the Rockridge Community and work on the issues of most interest to you — zoning, traffic, safety, parks, library, schools, arts, history, communications, fundraising — you decide. You must be a resident of Rockridge (see www.rockridge.org for boundaries), be able to attend board meetings the first Thursday of each month and be willing to actively promote the welfare of our neighborhood.

Please send a one-page letter introducing yourself and describing your interest in serving on the board to: Chad Thompson, RCPC Chair, 5530 Carlton Street, Oakland, 94618.

LIBRARY UPDATES

# We've Sealed the Floors, Now We Need to Oil the Tables!

*by Nancy Dutcher*

GOOD NEWS: at long last, the granite entry and exterior walkways have been cleaned and sealed. The names and quotations are once again readable. We apologize to all who complained about the difficulty in finding their tiles and hope they are satisfied with the results. The Friends of the Rockridge Library paid for the cleaning and sealing costs with money left over from our fund-raising efforts. This should last for several years. (Note: funds donated to help with library maintenance of the floor and furniture would be gratefully received. Mail a check payable to FORL to Box 123, 5856 College Ave. Oakland, 94618.

NEEDED: a volunteer crew of five to six people to provide some elbow grease to steel wool, and oil and wax the beautiful cherrywood tables in the library reading rooms. Some just need a little oiling, but several years of sun and public use have dried out a few of the table tops, requiring a good bit of that elbow grease. The tables are solid wood, and, if properly maintained, will last for many years. It should take a half day when the library is closed — a Friday or Sunday. We'd like to get this done this summer. Please call Nancy Dutcher at 653-6018 if you can help and we'll set a date convenient for the whole crew.

# *Hunt Begins for New City Library Director*

**Rockridge and Temescal library leaders describe ideal candidate**

*by Cy Gulassa*

What skills should the new Director for Oakland's Library have? Ask veteran library supporters Nancy Dutcher, Chair of Friends of the Rockridge Library, or Louise Kreifels, Treasurer of Friends of the Temescal Library. That's exactly what the City's search consultant did at a community hearing in the Temescal Library, Friday, June 23.

Dutcher and Kreifels wasted little time telling Los Angeles head hunter William D. Hawkins that the new director must be an exceptionally strong leader who can articulate needs and goals, raise money and be a "mouthpiece, a powerful advocate, especially before the City Council which tends to treat the system like a poor step child." In addition, he or she must have excellent administrative and people skills to delegate well, attract and hire talented employees, and set up an effective communications network. The new director should "personally visit all branches so that programs reflect local as well as system-wide needs." That's not all. The new director must be able to implement a multi-year strategic plan, pursue grants and commit to "stay on the job for a reasonable number of years." The City has had five directors in the past ten years.

Hawkins said he will assemble a pool of eight qualified candidates in August and estimates the City will announce the finalist in September.

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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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Theresa Nelson ..... Neighborhood Merchant
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- Do you have questions about newsletter distribution?
- Would you like to volunteer to be a *Rockridge News* block captain?

Contact us at one of the following addresses or telephone numbers:

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***The Rockridge News***, 5856 College Avenue, PMB 130, Oakland, CA 94618
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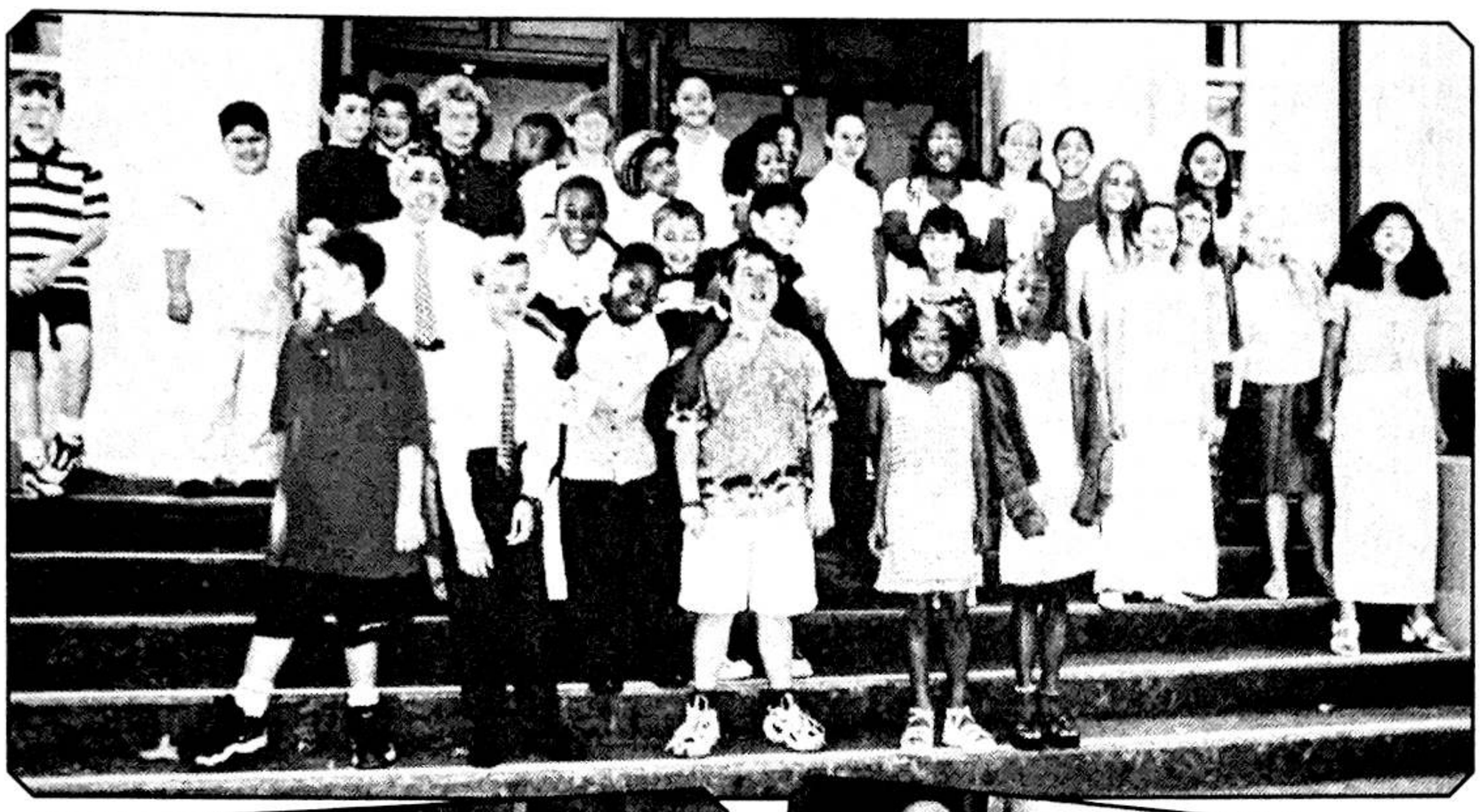
Articles published in *The Rockridge News* may be reprinted only with the permission of the editors. **Publication date of the next issue is**

☛ **September 9, 2000**
☛ **September deadline is August 24.**

**To advertise, call Madeline Alcorta at 547-2896. *(RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate.)***

# Chabot Class of 2000 Stepping Out

RCPC salutes the 5th grade graduates of Chabot Elementary, one of the most successful schools in the Oakland District and Rockridge's brightest academic star. After clowning for pictures on the steps of Chabot, the students marched into an auditorium filled with beaming parents, squirming kids, balloons, streamers and a stage full of pandas, penguins, flamingos, and a gorilla, courtesy of parent volunteers. The students flaunted their talents, shared their poetry and their remarkable ability to sit and stand — sort of — with the wave of a teacher's hand. Musical duets were often models of competitive fairness — sometimes the piano finished first, sometimes the violin. A sign of our times, the principal had to warn the 10-year-old fledglings to beware the dangers of drugs and sex as they migrate a few perilous blocks to the uncertainties of middle school.







**◂ Chabot Class of 2000**
**Ready to step out and strut their stuff, Chabot 2000 class members pause on the steps for class photo shot at 1/1000 of a second, barely enough speed to freeze frame their jubilation over being released to the big world.**

**Education is a family affair, amply demonstrated by two extended families at the Chabot celebrations:**

**At left below, four generations of the Drake family: From left, Chabot 2000 grad Zakary Drake, Grandmother Julie Clark, Sister Hailey Drake, Dad Dan Drake, Sister Ariel Drake, Great Grandmother Claire Stroud, and Mom Erika Clark-Drake.**

**At left, four generations of the Fraticelli family: Aunt Alicia Fraticelli, Grandfather Ben Fraticelli, Great Grandmother Ruth Severns, Grandmother Marianne Fraticelli, Mom Theresa Fraticelli and Chabot 2000 grad Tianna Fraticelli.**

*Photos: Cy Gulassa*

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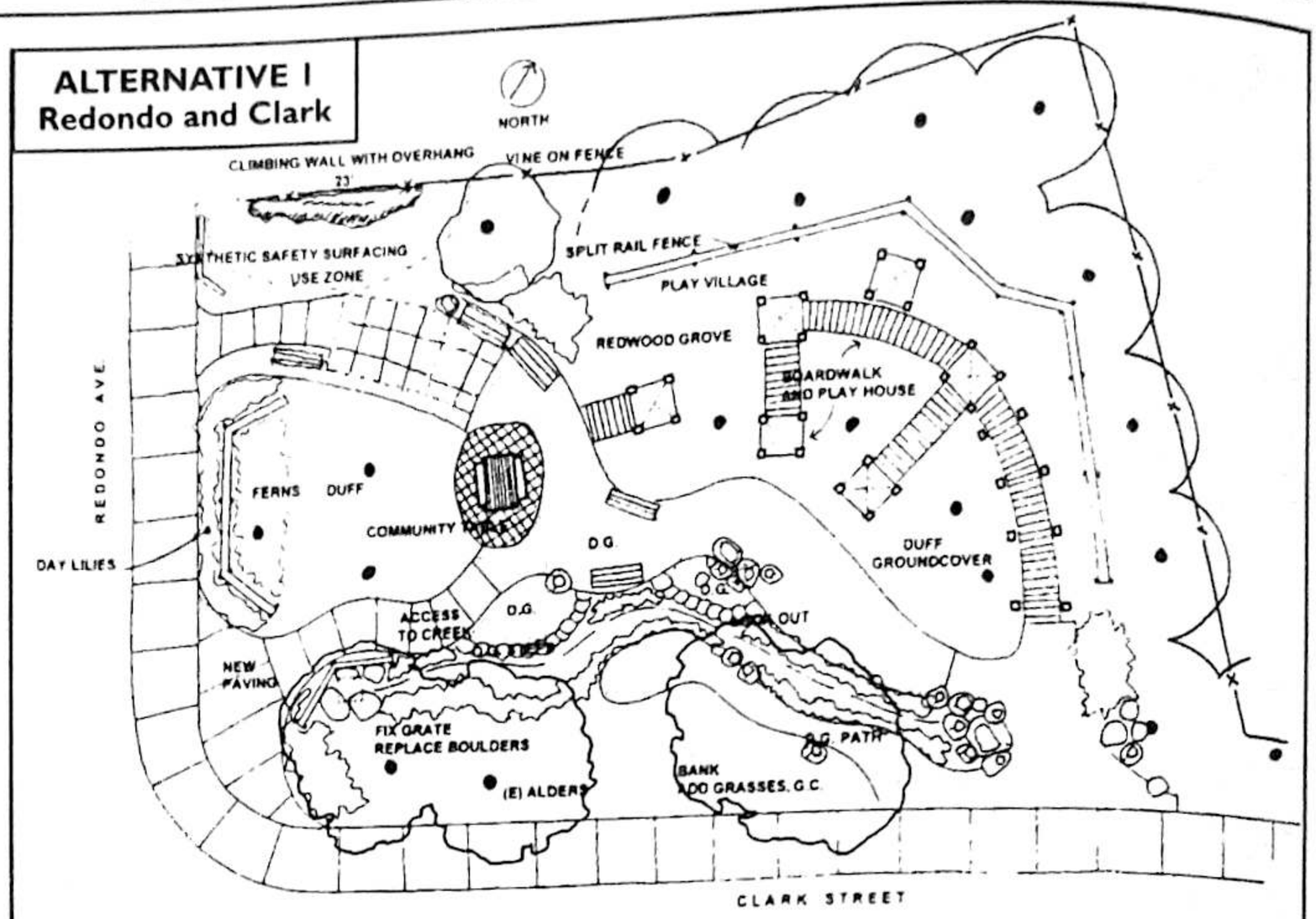
# Four Alternative Designs Proposed For Rockridge Greenbelt Park

*by: Theresa Nelson,*
*RCPC Parks Committee*

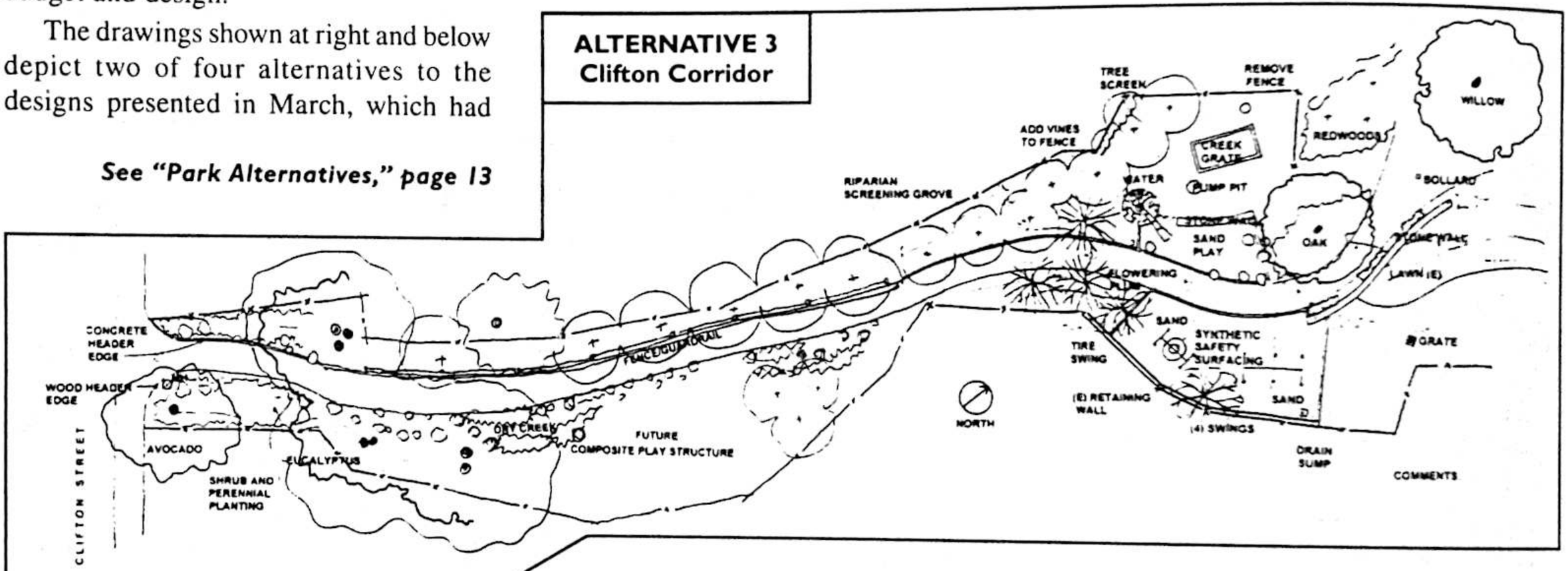
Neighbors meeting at Peralta School in mid-June reviewed four revised alternative designs for the new Rockridge Greenbelt Park. With Councilmember Jane Brunner facilitating the discussion, the group agreed on the need for more play equipment, but failed to agree on budget and design.

The drawings shown at right and below depict two of four alternatives to the designs presented in March, which had

*See "Park Alternatives," page 13*




**Alternative 1 adds a one-sided climbing wall for children ages 8-15, that would cost about $45,000. Other alternatives discussed in the accompanying article modify park designs presented in March.**




**Alternative 3 creates a flat area in the middle of the Clifton Corridor, relocates the path and provides some terracing to allow for a future play structure.**

**Alternative 2 (not shown) retains the original path through the corridor center and replaces swings at far right with a slide structure. Alternative 4 (not shown) adds a future play structure to the central area and retains swings.**



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# Flea Market Bazaar to Benefit Greenbelt Park

**Turn those summer blues to green on Sunday, July 30, at the DMV**

*by Susan Montauk*

Friends of the Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt (FROGS) will launch a fund-raising drive for the community Greenbelt Park (Hudson to Clark, off Claremont) with a spectacular bazaar at the Department of Motor Vehicles on Sunday, July 30, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

The wide-ranging flea market provides opportunities for bargain shopping or recycling stashed *objets d'art*. Kids will enjoy climbing aboard a real fire engine, learning evacuation procedures in a mock Fire Safety House, driving a low-rider talking police vehicle and engaging in arts and crafts activities and games. Parents can have their children fingerprinted for the Oakland Police lost children file. Plan to savor a variety of food dishes, including pasta donated by the Columbo Club. Listen to live "old rock and roll" music by the King Bees and win raffle prizes donated by local merchants. Park design renderings will be displayed and additional funding opportunities will be explained.

**FROGS (Friends of the Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt) hop to it to prepare a successful spectacular bazaar to initiate a fund-raising program for park development. Pictured from left are Jackie Freitas, Carol McClellan, Wally McClellan, and Denyse Stearns.**

*Photo: Susan Montauk*



## Flea Market Bazaar Stall Reservation

Name _____ Phone _____

# of spaces _____ Amount enclosed _____

Event takes place Sunday, July 30, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Vendors may set up at 9 a.m.

Flea Market spaces — $5 each for a space 8' X 18' — may be reserved by mail. Send checks payable to FROGS BAZAAR, 5856 College Avenue, PMB 130, Oakland, CA 94618. (Deadline: July 24.) Vendors will be asked to pledge 20% of sales to the Greenbelt Park. Your spaces will be on the reservation list when you arrive. Enter parking lot at Miles.

If you've been meaning to have a yard sale but just haven't gotten around to it, 100 spaces at $5/each will be available to sell your wares. At least two spaces are recommended for car parking/display. Some spaces may be available on the day of the event, but reservations are strongly recommended. (Use coupon above for space reservations.)

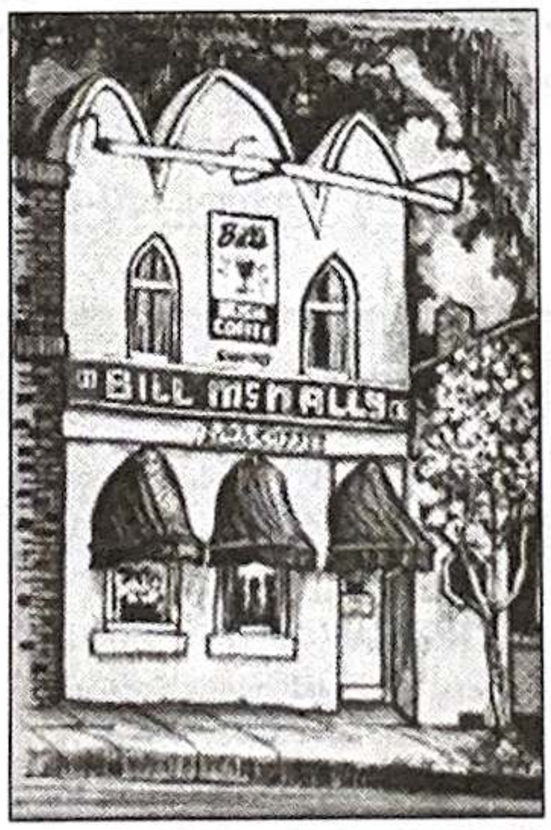
To simply donate items, a drop-off area will be open from 8-10 a.m. at the Miles Avenue parking lot entrance.

The park will follow culverted Temescal Creek from Hardy Park to Redondo park. Completing the entire master plan — landscaping, play structures and play houses, sand and water play, a climbing wall, picnic tables, decorative benches, environmental and historical interpretive signage, and footpaths — requires public and private sources for an additional $350,000. FROGS has a fundraising goal of $75,000 to complete the master plan.

For information, to volunteer to help on the day of the event, or if you have an idea for a bazaar booth/attraction, call Carol McClellan at 601-9010 (e-mail wallysound@earthlink.net), or Jackie Hoeppner Freitas at 428-2714 (e-mail: jhflaw@earthlink.net). Call the RCPC voice-mail to inquire about vendor spaces: 814-6060.

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# CCAC Project: No

*from page 1*

The parking issue affects the widest sweep of neighbors because CCAC students already take up much of the daytime parking on many of the streets east and west of Broadway and College. The college intends to house 126 full-time residents on the site, but provide only 38 parking spaces instead of the normal requirement of 66, one parking space per unit. Because many of these old neighborhood houses have only a one-car garage/driveway, and some have none, and the condominiums are limited to one space per unit, neighbors have endured parking problem for years. But the situation will worsen: the college's estimate of the number of cars students will own and their impact on the neighborhood is faulty and unrealistic; it does not even address the increase in parking during the evening and weekends caused by family and friends visiting students.

The proposed structure will increase traffic in an already congested intersection and limit visibility. The dormitory traffic would enter and exit via Clifton, generate more traffic on Broadway Terrace and impede the flow into Broadway. The visibility at the junction of Broadway and Broadway Terrace would be limited much more by this building than it presently is, and the afternoon sun might glare from the metal and glass and blind drivers on Broadway as they turn right onto Broadway Terrace.

If the noise generated by the dormitory presently on Broadway is any indication, the noise produced by 126 freshmen on this site would be substantial. The dormitory will be a magnet for parties and gatherings, and some worry that the activity will attract non-students of questionable character. Also of concern is the constant white noise from the heating and ventilating system needed for a building of this size. Student litter is already an issue. Neighbors are constantly picking up trash from the streets, sidewalks and gardens. As stated in the Environmental Impact Review, "The proposed use of this project site is considered by the Zoning Regulations as 'Extensive Impact Civic Activity.'" The college is proposing to install a new community on this corner, one quite unlike the one which surrounds it.

The aesthetic issue has many facets. We are saddened by this major threat to the character of our neighborhood. First, we stand to lose our Broadway Terrace Bay vista, which all of us enjoy. Even worse for some neighbors is the size of the building blocking the view — a large four-story structure totally out of context and scale with the neighborhood. The design and its materials are highly contemporary and modular. CCAC says the building is a segue to its campus and the neighborhood. But the contemporary structures on the CCAC campus blend with the historic buildings among trees and behind the CCAC wall. This building does not blend — it looms. Yes, we recognize that we live in an urbanized area, however this is a destination neighborhood — Rockridge. Would the college maintain this new facility better than it has maintained its other holdings? Could it control neon beer signs in dormitory windows? Two of the questions asked by the EIR were, "Would the project have a substantial adverse affect on a scenic vista?" Our answer: "Yes." "Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surrounding?" Our answer: "Yes."

We believe the development of this lot as conceived by CCAC tries to do too much as both a parking and dormitory facility. The dual function overtaxes this space, creating an out-of-scale structure with inadequate parking. Could this site instead hold a two-story parking structure, landscaped and unobtrusive, solving a huge problem for both the college and the neighborhood? Could students be housed on campus or in the general area as they are now? How about a dormitory on the site, less massive, with parking close by? Is there another solution? Can the city help in some way to accommodate this jewel of an art school? We believe there is a solution which meets the needs of the community as well as the college.

# Studio One Readies for Renovation Drive

The Oakland Studio Arts Association (OSAA), Studio One's advisory board, is gearing up to launch a capital fundraising campaign to fully renovate and upgrade the historic Studio One Art Center at 365 45th Street.

To prepare for this challenge, OSAA is looking for new board members with architecture, accounting, legal, publicity or fundraising experience.

To help ensure that Studio One stays in our community while becoming an even more vital and accessible art center for all Oaklanders, call Sandy Strehlou, 652-8084.


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# CCAC Project: Yes

*from page 1*

CCAC, a non-profit organization, provides training for fine artists and graphic, industrial, and architectural designers. From the paintings and sculpture we might enjoy in our homes; the computers, dishware, books, bicycles, furniture that we own; or the houses we live in, remember that somewhere an artist or designer gave these items the look and feel that we love. The galleries and museums that we cherish in our communities depend upon a steady stream of artists to produce work of note for our enjoyment. If we don't incorporate housing which is affordable to these students into our community, fewer students will have access to good education and we will suffer with the end result.

CCAC is making every effort to address this housing problem. Approximately 100 dorm rooms for upperclassmen are being added in the YWCA building in downtown Oakland. Freshmen, however, are best housed at the Oakland campus where most freshman core courses are conducted. The existing campus dorm houses only 34 students. The proposed new dormitory will house 126 students. Approximately 600 students attend classes at the Oakland campus, an enrollment similar to that of a small high school.

The proposed design of the dormitory is consistent with the General Plan. Because the college has an outstanding architectural design program, it is highly sensitive to the planning and aesthetic issues in building projects. The design of the facility has presented a challenge since it must relate simultaneously to three distinct adjacent contexts: the residential neighborhood, the art school, and the commercial zone along Broadway. CCAC has carefully studied the site context and met a number of times with nearby neighbors to better understand issues and respond whenever possible in the evolving design, while maintaining the high standards of a school that teaches design.

This project brings numerous benefits to the Rockridge community:

■ Aesthetic improvement of the neighborhood: the new dormitory will replace an unsightly surface parking lot. It will create a more continuous streetscape along Broadway and Broadway Terrace and provide an appropriate transition from civic/educational land use to residential land use.

■ Stabilization of upper College Avenue commercial neighborhood: in an area beset by high commercial turnover, the project will provide a solid customer base for local businesses. The safety of this area will be increased because more pedestrians will be frequenting the area in the evening hours.

■ Reduction in the amount of street noise: the building will serve as a sound barrier to shelter the adjacent residential areas from traffic noise.

■ Little or no increase in traffic: location of housing near "jobs" will decrease transportation trips. CCAC also promotes the use of mass transit and provides a free shuttle for students between its campuses and housing facilities. The new dormitory will continue to provide parking for students and visitors, especially in evenings and weekends when the neighborhood demand for street parking is highest.

Please join in supporting this project. The dormitory will not only provide much-needed affordable housing for art students, it will improve the physical characteristics of the neighborhood and increase the viability of local businesses along upper College Avenue.

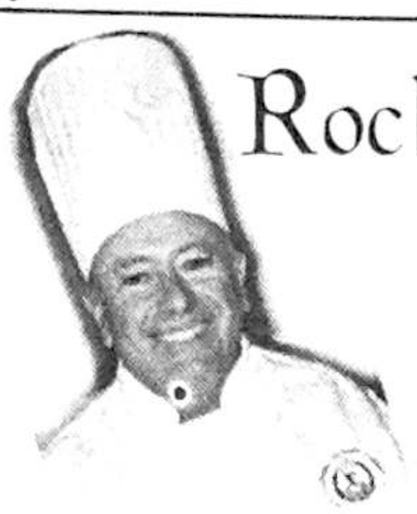
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# Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

## *Summer Time Fruit*

IT HAS BEEN HOT! When the temperature gets over 90, my memories go back to my childhood Brooklyn neighborhood. Summer on the streets of New York — families hanging out on the stoop, and kids playing street games like punch-ball, stick-ball, and johnny-on-the-pony. But what I remember most from those hot, steamy New York nights is eating summer fruit. After dinner, my friends and I would gather to devour peaches, plums, cherries, nectarines, and melons. We would use toothpicks to scrape out every morsel of peach meat from the crevices of the pit.

You've probably noticed that the summer issues of food magazines and weekly newspaper food sections all feature the standard barbecue and grilling recipes. Enough of summer and barbecue! Let's celebrate summer with a look at the wide variety of fruit we can find in our two Rockridge produce markets, Market Hall Produce and Yasai Market. You will also find a good summer fruit selection at Safeway and Albertson's. And the wonder of all, new summer fruit varieties arrive weekly at the produce markets. Peach season is just starting; plums of every variety will arrive in a few weeks, and of course culminating with tomato madness that begins in August.

While wondering through Market Hall Produce and Yasai Market, I found myself drawn to all the different types of melons. So many melons, so little time. Most melons belong to two broad classes — muskmelons and watermelons. The two principal varieties of muskmelons are those with netted skins that include cantaloupe and Persian melon, and those with smooth skins such as casaba, honeydew, and crenshaw. The skin can range in color from creamy white to jade green, with many variations and shades in between. Flesh colors vary and include beautiful salmon, golden, lime-green and shades of orange.

I found seven different types of melons at the market: crenshaw, galia, temptation, cantaloupe, honeydew, sharlyn, and orange flesh. Although muskmelons of one variety or another are available throughout most of the year, they're most abundant during the summer. Years ago, my father, a short-order cook and salad chef, showed me how to find a "ripe" melon. Press the blossom end of the melon firmly with your thumbs. The melon should have an ever so slight softness, but most of all, as you squeeze a ripe melon, it will give off a sweet perfume-like odor. You should avoid melons that are very soft or feel damp. Melons should be stored at room temperature until they ripen.

Melons make excellent cold soups. Living in a mostly Eastern European immigrant neighborhood, my earliest experience with cold soups was borscht (beet) and schav (sorrel). As my taste became more sophisticated, I began eating gazpacho and now melon soup. Start your backyard barbecue with a refreshing bowl of melon, tomato, and cucumber soup. I used a temptation melon from Market Hall Produce for this recipe. But you should experiment with different melons. Each variety offers a different flavor.

### Summer Melon, Tomato, Cucumber Soup

*(Adapted from The Silver Palate Cookbook, by Julee Rosso & Sheila Lukins)*

**Ingredients**

3 peeled ripe tomatoes (see *note*)
1 medium sized temptation honeydew or any other muskmelon, seeds and rind removed
1 large cucumber, peeled and seeded
grated zest of ½ small orange
2 tablespoons finely chopped mint
4 cups sour cream (light or fat free is fine)

1. Combine the tomatoes, melons, and cucumbers in a food processor. Process until smooth. Transfer to a bowl
2. Stir in orange zest and mint. Whisk in sour cream and chill
3. To serve, ladle into bowls and garnish some chopped cucumber and a sprig of mint

(Serves 4-6)

***Note***: To peel tomatoes, cut an "X" on the non-stem end. Plunge into rapidly boiling water for about a minute or until skin begins to split around the "X" cut. Remove with slotted spoon and immediately put into an ice-water bath. When cool, the skin easily peels off.

*Rockridge resident Barry Kaufman is a student at the California Culinary Academy.*

## Greater Rockridge Omission: Mocha Lisa

In last month's **Rockridge Cornucopia** review of College Avenue Coffee Culture, I omitted **Mocha Lisa,** located on the corner of College and Alcatraz. Technically, Mocha Lisa, High Tech Burrito, the Buttercup, and Noah's are in Berkeley. But Rockridge Neighbors embrace these shops as their own and part of what we like to call "Greater Rockridge."

**Mocha Lisa** features McLaughlin roasted coffee and a wide selection of hot and cold specialty teas. Distinctive among the other College Avenue coffeehouses are the baked-on-the-premises muffins, scones, and cookies. Owner Lisa Wilson is at Mocha Lisa by 6:00 a.m. every Saturday, baking the fine pastries. Her secret recipe for coffee mocha uses Ghirardelli chocolate and is the best you will find in the Bay Area. Mocha Lisa is a social meeting place for the neighborhood. Large tables with comfortable chairs in the back are ideal for business and social meetings. There is also a good representation of the laptop crowd plugged into cyberspace and enjoying a cup of coffee or tea. Mocha Lisa makes "Greater Rockridge" feel just like home. — *Barry Kaufman*

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# CCAC: RCPC

*from page 1*

and present danger" is often easier than doing the long, difficult work of getting consensus for something.

### About Appropriate Development

Over the years, RCPC has tried to craft a vision of appropriate neighborhood development. The principles of this vision are embodied in the C-31 zoning designation for College Avenue and the Rockridge Area Plan, produced in 1993. We desire a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use "Urban Village." Traditionally, RCPC monitors projects and tries to work with developers to ensure they meet these standards. If a project falls short or an acceptable alternative can't be achieved, RCPC will oppose the development and lobby for changes in plans. Once the standards are met, RCPC drops its opposition but remains vigilant. To maintain its independence, RCPC does not endorse projects.

The southern portion of College Avenue and the intersection with Broadway are areas which can use some enhancement. Fitting new buildings into the existing developed environment is always a challenge. Even the best buildings will likely have some impact on the immediate surroundings. While there is little enthusiasm for the design of the CCAC project, the proposed use seems like a good transition between the institutional setting of the college and the nearby residences. The size and bulk of the building is not out of scale with other nearby residential buildings.

### The Parking & Traffic Dilemma

Parking will always be an issue in a compact neighborhood like Rockridge. To build enough parking to eliminate problems will just encourage more cars to come into the neighborhood, making traffic worse. Amenities for students, including a 24-hour grocery store and major transit lines, are near the proposed site. RCPC would like CCAC to have residents sign a "car-free" pledge and provide transit passes as part of the rent or student fees. Project residents should be ineligible for on-street parking permits.

Regarding traffic, we believe a signal should be added to the intersection of Broadway and Broadway Terrace regardless of the outcome of this project.

# RCPC Opposes 4th Caldecott Bore

**Study flawed and impact on local communities ignored**

The RCPC Board of Directors voted at its June meeting to oppose construction of the 4th Caldecott bore based on the concerns detailed in the June *Rockridge News* issue and widespread community input. The Board believes that the study as it now stands demonstrates neither the need nor cost-effectiveness of such a project. In fact, the corridor's worst problems stemming from the regular commute direction traffic receive almost no relief from the proposed alternatives. The Board also objects to the minimal consideration of impacts on local Oakland streets, the lack of Rockridge mitigations in the initial project budget, and the absence of Oakland planning staff in developing options. Until these issues are fully addressed, the RCPC Board believes that our only responsible action is to oppose construction of the 4th bore.

In a related development, the Oakland Public Works Committee unanimously approved a staff report recommending that the City not support construction of a 4th bore unless and until certain concerns are addressed, among them the lack of comprehensive mitigations for the City. This item should be placed on the full Council agenda soon. For further information, visit our website at www.rockridge.org or contact us at 814-6060.

The study advisory committee members are making life hot for MTC officials, the group conducting the study. Demanding accurate comparison information, the Policy Advisory Committee has postponed the next round of public meetings until their requests are met. These actions effectively postpone the study's conclusion and provide hope that the corridor's problems will finally be adequately addressed. Identification of effective short and long-term congestion relief strategies would benefit the entire area and validate the study conclusions.

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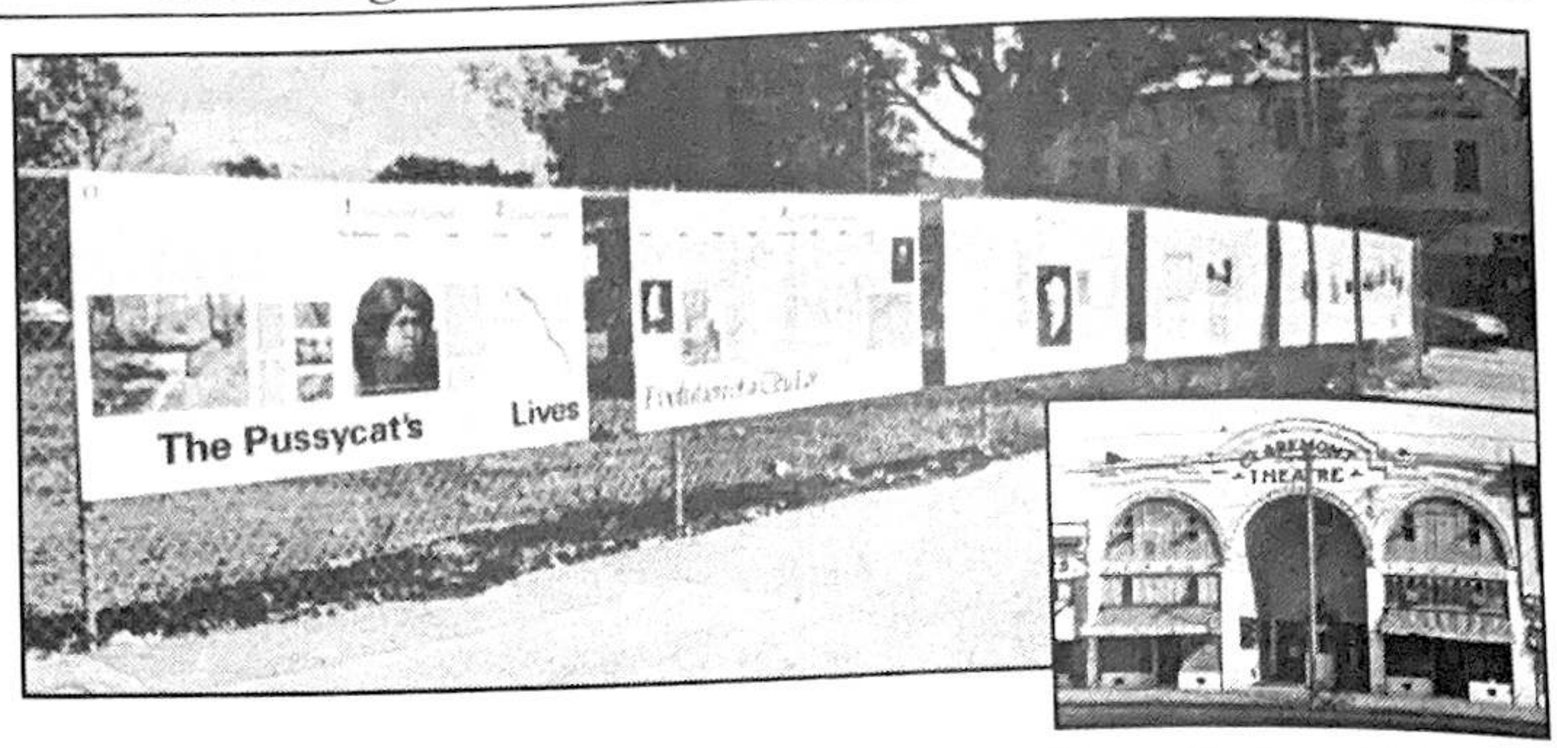
# The 10th Life Of the Pussycat

## Temescal festival commemorates the history of a vacant lot

*by: Theresa Nelson*

From Native American fishing village to an X-rated theater, the now-vacant lot at the corner of 51st and Telegraph Avenue has had many lives.

Recently, hundreds of Rockridge and Temescal neighbors gathered at the site to enjoy an evening of classic films, community discussions and performances, and to consider what should happen next at the site.




**200 years of a Temescal site's history was reviewed in a display at 51st and Telegraph designed by Jeff Norman to show the continuity of use and to consider future possibilities for the space.** *Photo: Lydia Gans (Inset photo of the Claremont Theatre, an original structure that ultimately became the Pussy Cat Theatre, supplied by Jeff Norman*

*Beyond the Pussycat: Nine Lives of a Neighborhood Landmark* was conceived and executed by Temescal artist Jeff Norman of Shared Ground/Temescal. The event brought together people of all ages, from all walks of life who enjoyed a celebration of community and found a magical sense of a place in a vacant lot transformed to impromptu performing arts center.

*Beyond the Pussycat* was supported in part by a grant from the City of Oakland's Department of Craft and Cultural Arts and the Parades, Runs and Street Festivals Fund. Local businesses donated everything from electrical hookups (RCPC Board Member Dan Pitcock of Roberts Electric and Global Entertainment) to high-end sound systems (Rosemary Rodd of Leo's Professional Audio) to decorated cakes and soft drinks (Temescal Merchants). Door prizes and bingo prizes were given away, courtesy of Temescal Merchants and Dreyers. Residents Jennifer Dowling and Ray Raineri presented a history of the neighborhood the night before the event at Carter Middle School, highlighting decades of change in the neighborhood.

Residents brought picnics and staked out sites to sit. Music, dance and spoken-word performances such as the Lemon Limelights, Opera Piccola, The Ranis, Snakes in Eden, and Stikman and McWoman entertained the crowd. Children made glitter sticks and other crafts at a booth run by the East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse. Steve Costa and other neighborhood residents ran several "community conversations" where participants described their ideas for the future of the site. Possible uses included a performance space, park, store (clothing and other items), movie theatre, or café with a creek running through it. Photos of neighbors who were interviewed were posted on the fence now surrounding the lot, and videographers and photographers covered the event. My nine-year-old daughter commented, "I wish we had movies here every Saturday night!"

At sunset, the final act began: Eileen Suzio, longtime 49th Street resident, showed a collection of home movies of life in the 50s. From mothers in pearls and high heels to children wearing white shirts and dresses, it was a window into a different time. The film of the hula hoop contest at the old Vern's Market drew the evening's best applause. Finally, everyone settled down for a screening of the classic Buster Keaton film, "Sherlock, Jr." Original music by The Dactyls accompanied the film, blending acoustic instruments with an array of percussion objects. Following the show, homemade horns were handed out to the crowd, and we packed up our picnics and left the site, blowing our horns all the way home.

Heartfelt thanks go to Jeff Norman, who conceived and organized the event. His vision revealed the vacant lot to be full of the past and encouraged hope that soon it will again be an important part of the community.

The rich exhibit, "Nine Lives of a Neighborhood Landmark" remains posted at the site along the fence at 51st and Telegraph. Take a few minutes to read this fascinating summary of local changes over the past 200 years, an illuminating example of cultural and historical research.



Saraya Motley

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**The media says the market is slowing. What does that mean in Rockridge?**

During the month of April, 19 residential properties went pending & sold in the Rockridge community. In May, 34 went pending and sold. This is a 79% increase.

New listings increased by 89% in one month alone. This increase in supply, or inventory slightly decreased the demand by widening the choice for buyers. Properties were still overbid by 18% in May.

**It is still a HOT Market.**
**Call me for more information....**

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## Going to The Seashore

Remember when summertime meant going to the seashore for weeks and months on end ? There was this old-fashioned notion around that people needed some time away from everything to replenish body, mind and spirit.

And so, many of us grew up spending idle summer days doing nothing terribly important, reading lots of books, hanging out with friends we didn't see every day. And after a while we would come home again, ready to hit the ground running, hearts and minds refreshed and new.

Here is our current version of this summer idyll: We jet to Hawaii for a few days lashed to a long electronic tether, and then we boomerang back, our brains




still compressed and perfectly preserved in the same neat and tidy boxes they were shipped in in the first place. No spiritual or creative respite here. And it's a point missed.

Summer is a time to relax a little, to think out of the box. Maybe we don't have as much time for idle leisure any more. But the seashore is always there. It is a state of mind. You can go there anytime. Just turn off that dang cell phone, give the Internet a rest and head unarmed out into the unknown. Conceivably that's just a step away from you. Do a thing you never did before: Talk or listen to a person you have never met — or listened to — before. Sketch a tree. Be a bird. Learn to juggle. Try cooking something without a recipe. Do nothing square, nothing finite, nothing that comes with instructions. Then feel the briny water and warm sand between your toes.... Simple, no?

## Oakland At Your Feet

If you've experienced historic Oakland only from the window of your car, why not make a date this summer to see it all on foot. Be prepared to be surprised. Downtown Oakland is undergoing a major rebirth even as we speak, with new buildings nudging old ones being restored at a pace we have not seen in many years.. A good place to start rediscovering our fascinating City might be the Pardee House. It's the one you see from Freeway 980 near Preservation Park and you've always meant to visit one day. The Pardee Home, one of finest historic houses in Northern California, is inviting you to come see their progress as well as enjoy a new program of salon-style evening events this summer called "Oakland Remembers." Then call OHA (763-9218) for their current schedule of walking tours running right through August.

This is a journey you'll never forget. You'll never have to ask again where Jingletown is, or doubt that Oakland had a cable railway.

For other free tours put on by the City of Oakland , call 238-3234. Volunteer guides are always welcomed by all these organizations, by the way.

## Odds And Ends

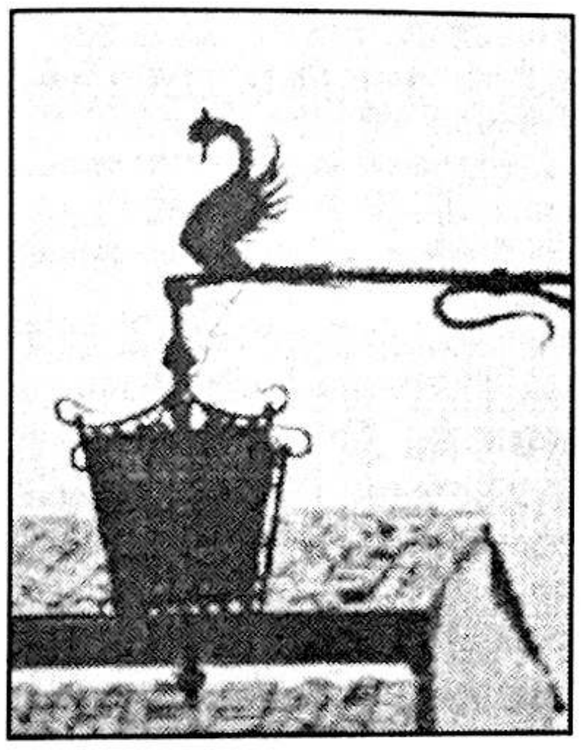
Anyone interested in joining us for our project, Rockridge 2000 A Pictorial Essay?

We are a loosely organized group of photographers and other creative types who are working toward putting together a portfolio of Rockridge images for exhibition and publication in the spring of 2001.

Call me for more information at 652-6664. Also, thinking ahead, if you have any interesting story ideas for future articles, please let me know. Right now, I would love to hear from the story tellers and puppeteers in our midst. I know you are out there.

Wishing all of you a wonderful summer at the seashore!

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## College Avenue Adult Activities Center

College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5955 College Ave.
All activities Wednesdays, 11-noon. Lunch follows, $1.75.
Slide and video (V) shows (SS) in Lighthouse Room.
July 12: (V) "History of Modern Household Appliances"
July 19: (SS) Bob and Jessie Neptune
July 26: (SS) "Hanoi, Vietnam", Cathy Connelly
Aug. 2: (SS) "Sweden", Charles Fitch
Aug. 9: (V) Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
Aug. 16: (V) "Liberace"
Aug. 23: Social
Aug. 30: BINGO

## Greenbelt Fleamarket Bazaar

Sunday, July 30, 10-4 p.m. at the Department of Motor Vehicles parking lot (Miles/Cavour). Sell or buy flea market wares; live music, food and drinks, entertainment for the kids and fire engine and firehouse safety lessons. Parking on DMV lot off Claremont Avenue. Call 814-6060 for market stall reservations @$5/stall and see Bazaar article on page 5.

## Jane Brunner North Oakland Community Summer Picnic

Sunday, July 30, 1-5 P.M., Temescal Park picnic site, parking lot off Broadway Terrace. Barbecue and drinks provided. Salad & dessert dishes welcome.

## NCPC Meetings

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

## Oakland Tours

Discover Oakland's changing skyline, landmarks, churches and high rises on one of many free guided walking tours offered Wednesdays and Saturdays, May through October. Call 238-3234 to add your name to our mailing list and to receive a 2000 Schedule. Log on to www.oaklandnet.com, click on the community link for map, dates and starting places. Sunday, July 16, 2-4:30 p.m., An African American Walking Tour of Downtown. Meet at Preservation Park Entrance-13th/MLK Way. Call OHA 763-9218. OHA members $5 donation, $7 general.
July 8 Preservation Park
July 12 Downtown Historic District
July 15 City Center
July 19 Uptown to the Lake
July 22 Churches & Temples
July 26 Chinatown
July 29 Old Oakland Historic District

## Gripe Session, Working with Elders

Beginning Wednesday, July 12, 3-5:30 p.m. at the Rockridge Library, 5366 College Avenue. This free class meets the second Wednesday of every month. Call Pam Wong, 879-4090 for information. Pleasant Valley Adult School, Oakland Unified School District

## Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017
Storytimes for July and August, 2000
Toddler Story Times-Saturday mornings, 1030 a.m: 7/15, 7/22, 7/29, 8/5,8/12, 8/19 and 8/26
Pre-School Story Times-Tuesdays: 7/18, 8/1, and 8/15 at 10:30 & 11:00 a.m.
Pajama Story Times-Wednesdays: 7/12, 7/26, 8/9, 8/23 at 7:00 p.m.
Special Programs: Wed. 7/05, 7 p.m.-Musician Gary Lapow
Wed. 7/19, 7 p.m.-Snapdragon Puppets doing The Big Little Circus"
Wed. 8/16, 7 p.m.-Barangay (Philippino Folk Dance)
Sat. 8/16, 3 p.m.-Flying Calamari Brothers-Magic Show
Wed. 9/6, 7 p.m.-Bubbleman and The End of Summer Reading Party
Oakland Public Library Summer Reading Game began June 15, 2000 and ends August 19. Read any books you choose, keeping track of your time on our gameboard, and get prizes when you visit the library! Sign up on or after June 15 at Rockridge branch, or at any Oakland Public Library.
Lawyers in the Library: Free advice 6-8 p.m., first Thursday each month. Signup starts at 5:00.

## STUDIO ONE ART CENTER

365 45th Street, 597-5027 Some summer classes for 12-15 year olds, Monday-Thursday, 4-6 p.m. in photography, painting and drawing, and ceramics.

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## Letters to The Editor

*The Rockridge News*
**5856 College Ave., #130**
**Oakland, CA 94618**

### Hydrangea Alert!

**Editor:**

Now that Hydrangeas are in full bloom, please be on the lookout for strangers (thieves) cutting your Hydrangeas to sell at the flower marts. For the past couple of years, my plant has been robbed of its beautiful flowers during the night. Not only have mine been stolen (and the bush hacked), but also my neighbor's. I know of one instance when a friend came home to discover a person in their front yard cutting the flowers. This is stealing! Unfortunately, the Police Department does not find this a crime worth investigating, but as a community, we can be on the lookout and possibly stop the person(s). It is a crime to have our bushes robbed of their beauty for someone else's profit.

*Miss Hane*
*Locksley Avenue*

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## Park Alternatives

*from page 4*

some good elements but lacked active play areas for children of various ages. Alternative 1 adds an activity at Redondo, a one-sided climbing wall for ages 8-15, costing about $45,000. Alternative 2 removes the four sling swings in the Clifton Corridor, and adds a natural-looking play structure with 3 slides for younger children, ages 2-5, costing about $11,000. Alternative 3 creates a flat area in the middle of the Clifton Corridor, relocating the path and doing some terracing to allow for a future play structure to be built.

Alternative 4 is really phase two of Alternative 3 (see illustration, page 4), as it includes a larger, natural-looking play structure in the Clifton Corridor, which could handle ages 3-12, and keeps the swings. This structure runs about $80-100,000, including installing required resilient play surfaces. All the designs include increased planting and screening for neighbors. The designers noted that there is insufficient space at Redondo for a play structure because the trees do not allow room for the required "fall zone," nor is there space in the upper Clifton Corridor area near Hardy.

Participants agreed to move the path in the Clifton Corridor, leaving space for a future multi-age play structure; parents of young children want it located in the middle of the Clifton Corridor. Most liked the climbing wall as an option for older children. Designers will produce new drawings reflecting these preferences.

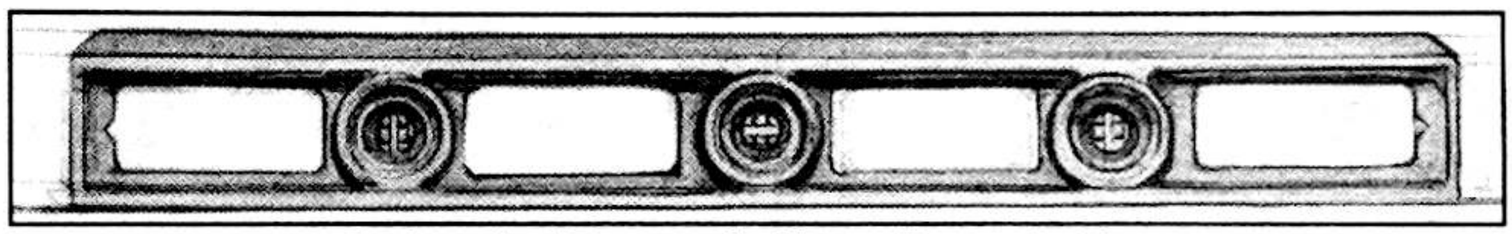
Councilmember Brunner announced that the owner of the former Safeway site is negotiating with Children's Hospital to convert the building to office use. Not all current parking would be required, so the community may seek to negotiate some of the area by the creek for a larger play structure. This is a speculative option.

Two subcommittees are forming to work on the corridor play structure location and on the possibility of the Safeway site. Please contact Councilmember Brunner's office to serve on a committee.

Fundraising opportunities are being developed (see article, page 5) for play equipment, benches, entry features, and other amenities, which will be announced September in *The Rockridge News*.

For more information on the fundraising committee, please contact Steve Costa, 655-4818.

*Frank* **SILVER CONSTRUCTION**



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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. Dial 911 to report suspected crimes in progress.*

## Burglaries

Officer Watson, our Community Policing Officer, reports a rash of residential burglaries in the month of June, many occurring during daylight hours. Burglaries or attempted burglaries were reported on the 5200 and 5400 block of Shafter, the 400 block of 61st Street, the 400 block of 63rd Street, and the 5500 block of College. She advises locking all windows when not at home and turning on burglar alarms.

## Robbery

The police responded to a robbery on the corner of College Ave. and Forest, June 8, 3 a.m. No details available.

## Strong-Arm Robberies

An attempted purse snatching occurred May 9, 12:40 p.m., on the 400 block of Forest. The two assailants were thwarted by the victim and the intervention of a concerned bystander. Officer Watson reports a wallet stolen from a pedestrian June 1, 2:15 p.m., on the 5500 block of College Ave. The suspect approached from behind, bumped the victim, grabbed the wallet and ran. He was described as an Hispanic male, 18-24, 5'10", 165 pounds, with short hair, wearing a white ball cap. An attempted purse snatching occurred Saturday, June 10, on the 6300 block of College at 11:30 a.m. The suspect, a black male in his mid-teens, 5' 7" with a stocky build, wearing a black T-shirt, attempted to grab the purse, knocking the victim down in the process. When the victim would not release it, the suspect ran to his bicycle and rode away up Claremont Ave.

On Wednesday, June 21, 11:05 p.m., an individual was shot in the hip when he refused to surrender his wallet during an attempted mugging on Oak Grove Ave. The two assailants fled on foot toward Forest Street. Neighbors came to the victim's aid, and the police investigation is continuing. Officer Watson says it is generally advisable not to resist if faced with a demand to surrender property.

## Suspicious Individual

On Thursday, June 1, from 10:00 to 10:30 p.m., a suspicious individual knocked on doors at residences on the 300 block of Clifton, 5300 block of Manila, and the 5150 block of Coronado, each time giving a different reason for needing money. The suspect was described as a black male, approximately 5'10", in his late 30s or early 40s, clean-shaven with shaved head, wearing gold-rimmed glasses. The police were notified.

Officer Watson reports that a man has been entering yards, claiming to be looking for his dog "Oscar." He may be casing homes and should be reported to the police using the non-emergency number (777-3333). The suspect is described as a black male, 6'1", 25-35, thin build with pocked complexion and hair in a 1" natural cut.

## Theft

A resident of Manila Ave. near Clifton reports that a large number of hydrangea blossoms were cut from their bushes.






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# The Neighborhood Merchant

BY THERESA NELSON

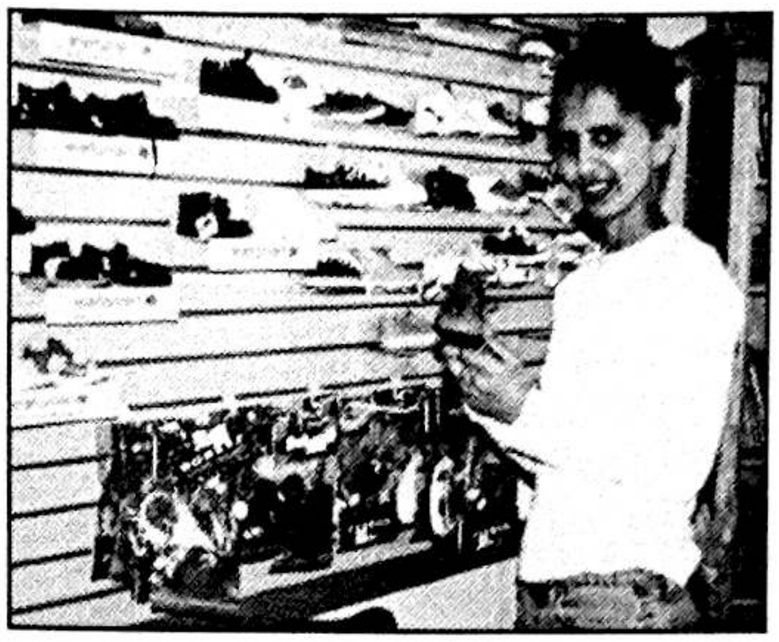


Photo: Chris Ahlstrand

**Cotton and Company**
**5901 College Avenue, Oakland 653-8058**
**10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m. Monday - Saturday**

On a sunny June morning, I had a before-hours look inside the new location of Cotton and Company and a chance to talk about changes in children's retailing with owner Claudette von Rusten. A longtime Rockridge resident, Claudette runs the store with her daughter, Dawn Grundler.

Like many other specialty children's stores, Cotton and Company has ridden the wave of the second baby boom. After opening in 1990 at the corner of Chabot and College, the infant/maternity section moved to the Capezio building in 1995, cribs and bedding to the former frozen yogurt store in 1998, and a companion store opened in Lafayette (a game of musical stores?). Last March Cotton and Company made its big move into former Global Video, a 5,000 square-foot space, and now plans to expand next door into the vacated Tribeca Restaurant. Claudette's aim in consolidation is to create more room for displays, enhance access for the disabled and make the place more kid friendly with fun colors and motifs. Customers are immediately struck by the stunning carpet, Kelly green with children's drawings and the ABCs and 123s of childhood. When customers ask, Claudette tells this story: "I've always loved children's art, so my sister, who's an artist, helped me design it, inspired by some of the children's art we've collected at the stores over the years. The carpet was made especially for us, but we've had so many requests we may start to sell it as well."



**Cotton & Company employee Alemtsehay Tsega shows the wide array of shoes carried by the store.** *Photo: Chris Ahlstrand*

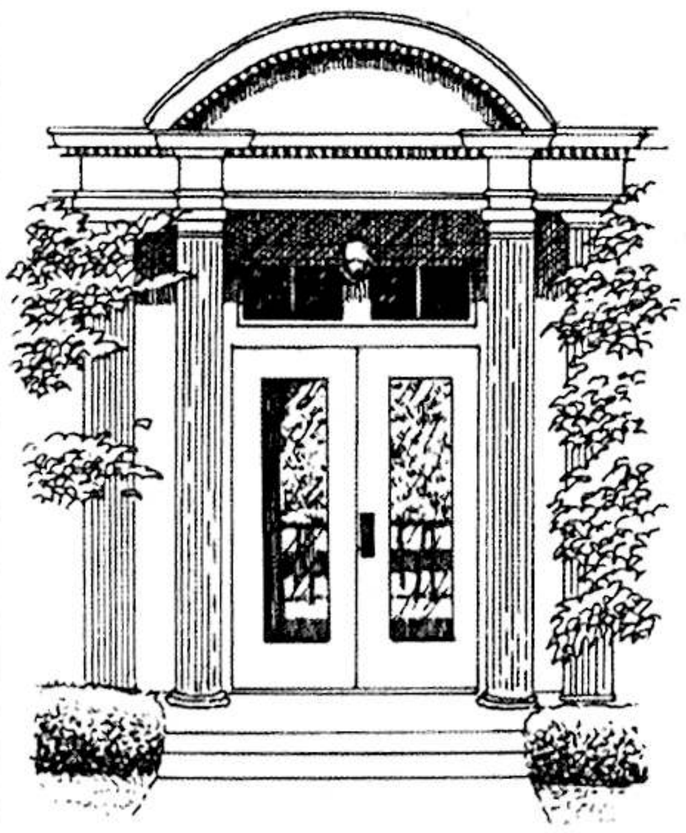
Cotton and Company is known for the Flapdoodles brand, cotton knits in luscious colors and prints in sizes from newborns to 14-16s. Claudette, who says, "I'm a bit French myself," also sells popular French and Italian brands. Her philosophy is to shun faddish clothes, which are often poorly constructed, and stick with high-quality basics and special-occasion items. The maternity section includes Japanese Weekend, Mother To Be, Carewear, and nursing bras and pumps. A shimmery green warm-up jacket and black athletic top with pants caught my eye. Clearly, maternity wear has changed a lot over the years.

"Many young families make use of the store's gift registry for their new babies," Claudette explains, "and then bridge to tough-wearing pre-school and elementary wear like the popular 'trekker' pants." Trekkers are unique to her store and the only pants my child was unable to wear through at the knees. For style-conscious kids, the classic cargo pants and print t-shirts maintain the high quality and simplicity both they and parents want, up to size 16. Claudette stocks camisoles and crop-top bras for young girls as they develop, but she encourages parents to help their kids stay children as long as possible with age-appropriate clothing. Shoes from Elefanten and Doc Marten span sizes from first walkers to big-kid size 5, and a shoe card program awards a free 10th pair.

While customers come for quality selections, they also appreciate the cheerful service of an experienced staff. Claudette's daughter Dawn, a wonderfully cheerful young woman, is asked for by name by many neighborhood children and receives valentines and flowers from her young customers. One adult customer introduced Dawn to her future husband, and a young customer was the flower girl at Dawn's wedding.

Both mother and daughter clearly enjoy the long-term relationships they have built with their customers. As the store opens this morning, Claudette greets a young mother by name, assists her with a maternity selection, and helps her daughter try on a feathered and bejeweled dress-up outfit. Another mother-to-be asks for help with nursing equipment, and Claudette (a grandmother herself) details options. As long as the baby boom continues in Rockridge — and from the looks of the store on a weekday morning it is going strong — Cotton and Company will provide the quality and service customers want.

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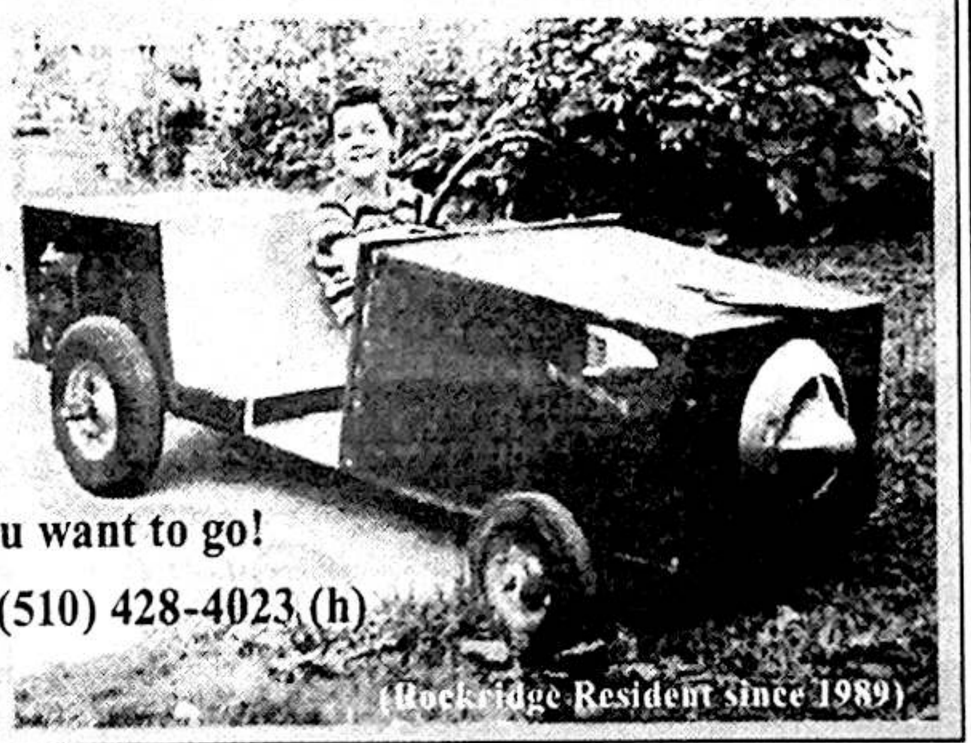
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