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THE Rockridge News

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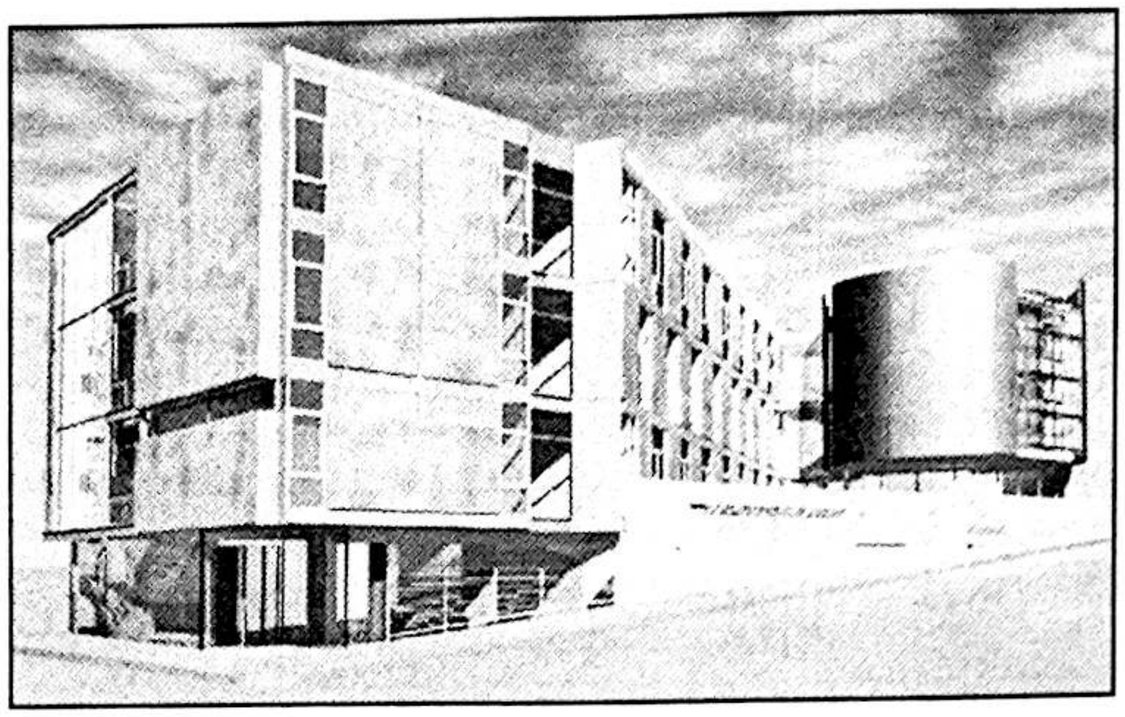
RCPC Votes to Oppose CCAC Dorm Project

Opposition based on zoning issues

by Ronnie Spitzer, RCPC Vice Chair

At its August 3 meeting, RCPC voted to oppose the CCAC dormitory project on Broadway. In making its decision, the Board made clear that it was not opposed to affordable housing for students. It agrees that CCAC has a right to design and build a facility on the site in keeping with its reputation as a premiere school of design and it lauds the goal of providing students with low-cost housing and easy access to its Oakland campus.

RCPC opposition is based primarily on zoning matters. As it does with all Rockridge development, RCPC examined the combined requirements of C-31 zoning, the "findings" of City Planning staff, the required conditional use permits and variances, and the concerns of local residents.



CCAC's proposed student dormitory and parking garage as viewed looking toward Broadway Terrace from Broadway at Clifton.

Graphic supplied by project architect.

As presently designed, the CCAC project, a four-story dormitory containing 66 bedroom units for 120 students and six resident assistants, requires a conditional use permit for the designation "Extensive Impact Civic Use," minor variances for setbacks and height, and a major conditional use permit (CUP) for design features such as the Clifton driveway for the parking garage. Several CUPs required by the C-31 zoning regulations governing the site and requiring a blend of pedestrian retail with other business and residential uses are absent.

In its initial report dated May 24, Planning Department staff recommended approval of the project. In RCPC's opinion, staff made a serious error: It failed to acknowledge that the site is not of the same lot as the rest of the CCAC campus, but rather is located across the street in a residential area. At first a seemingly trivial distinction, the principle of contiguity — explicitly required in the zoning codes to qualify as an "Extensive Impact Civic Activity," (appropriate to institutions such as hospitals, churches, and colleges) —

See "CCAC Plans," page 7

RCPC General Meeting Agenda

Thursday, September 21, 7:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library
Community Room
5366 College Avenue (at Manila)

■ **CCAC Proposal Revisited**

RCPC will lead the discussion of the College of Arts and Craft dorm project for Broadway/Broadway Terrace. CCAC Vice President David Kirshman, Dean David Meckel, Architect Mark Horton and Project Manager John Clawson will present the recent design and dorm policy changes. Audience discussion will follow. (Page 1)

■ **What's New, Pussycat?**

North Oakland Neighbors (NON) will bring us up to date on the options for the 51st/Telegraph lot. (Page 14)

Do FROGs

have thumbs? You bet, and all six of them are up in the air over the success of the fund-raiser for FRiends of the Rockridge Greenbelt (FROG) held at the Claremont Avenue DMV July 30. The Flea Market Bazaar attracted 600 visitors and generated over $4,000 for the purchase of amenities for the new Rockridge park.

From left to right, FROG chair Steven Costa, Parks and Recreation Director Jim Ryugo, Bazaar Co-Chair Jackie Hoeppner-Freitas, organizer Susan Montauk, Co-Chair Carol McClellan and organizer Theresa Nelson.



Story and more pictures, page 6.

book ■ corner



Photo: Chris Ahlstrand

by Gay Ducey Children's Librarian
Two-part Harmony

by Gay Ducey

Time was when there were lots of opportunities to sing: The church choir, the town glee club, even the piano at the corner bar seemed to collect crooners looking for a choral home. Radio, when it appeared, offered even more opportunities to join in. It's harder to find places these days.

I have always liked to sing. I joined the church choir in the fifth grade and was belting out the Messiah by age 13, encouraged by our choir director, Ralph Slifkin. He believed everyone could and should sing; that enthusiasm, not talent, was a requisite. Emboldened, I sang all the time. From radio, TV, and just listening, I absorbed scores of songs from every musical genre. I liked all music equally. I still do... and I still sing.

My husband and I sang to the kids every night. I think our selections were a bit doctrinaire since the children knew the words to "Which Side Are You On?" but not to "Hush, Little Baby." Both kids liked the warbling, but only one joined in before he could form words. I was pleased because I thought we might have another singer in the family (a trio!). I knew it when our three-year-old son began slamming out "Don't (UH) Stop (UH) Thinkingabouttomorrow" while in the bathroom. I think he liked the reverb.

We wanted to encourage the kids' interests, although we tended to see through the lens of our own wishes, enthusiasms and biases. We were early entrants in the merry race of ice skating lessons, French lessons, soccer coaching, and even a little chess. We found several singing classes for Seth, but he was resolutely opposed. No reason that we could pry out of him, just "No." Yet he sang from early morning on. One day when I heard him improvising to a song on the radio, I told him about barbershop quartet singing. "I think I like that," he said.

Pat and I found the Berkeley meeting of SPEBSQA. We three arrived at the Elks Club in downtown Berkeley one fall evening so Seth (and Pat) could sing. They walked in but I was stopped by a very courtly man with a clipboard who said, "I'm afraid we practice without an audience. I could direct you to the Sweet Adelines, our distaff arm."

It was such a pleasant evening that I walked and window shopped for awhile. When I returned, the Elks Club door was locked, so I circled the building. I stopped when I heard the sweet sound of male voices coming from an open basement window. They were singing "Chattanooga Choo Choo," with a gentle swing. The baritones carried the melody, but my husband's second bass was the strong anchor that allowed the tenor to take the liberties that only tenors take. This one created a new line of notes that danced higher and higher, moored by the deep voice below. When the song ended, my son's last note still climbed in the cooling air, and the men below me clapped and chuckled. "These young ones," one of them said fondly. "They always know how to cut the mustard." I think he meant the two of them.

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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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Publication date of the next issue is

- **October 7, 2000;**
- **October deadline is September 21.**

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

Leadership Changes for RCPC

Chad Thompson Steps Down as RCPC Chair

After a year in office, RCPC Chair Chad Thompson is stepping down due to growing family and professional commitments. He plans to stay on as a board member and continue to serve on the RCPC zoning committee.

During his tenure as chair of both RCPC and the Zoning Committee, Chad was instrumental in getting Cigarettes Cheaper to move out of Rockridge, appealed Dryer's out-of-scale expansion permit renewal, lobbied against a Rockridge Starbuck's and oversaw the addition of several new developments, including the new building on the old *Maison d'Etre* site. Most recently, Chad represented RCPC in meetings with neighbors and college officials over the CCAC dormitory proposal.

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RCPC Board Elects Susan Montauk to be Chair

On August 3, RCPC's Board of Directors selected Susan Montauk to be Chair of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC). Montauk replaces Chad Thompson, who resigned recently due to family and business pressures.



A member of the RCPC board since 1994, Susan has served as secretary and vice chair, and is currently the business officer for *The Rockridge News*. The newsletter, now in its 14th year, is supported entirely by an ad program that she introduced.

A skilled activist with strong commitment to RCPC and the community, Susan organized three highly successful Rockridge Kitchen Tours which attracted thousands of visitors and helped put RCPC on sound financial footing. She is also a founder of TemeRock, a joint Temescal and Rockridge gardening organization dedicated to cleaning up and beautifying 51st Street and surrounding areas. Most recently, she is a charter member of FRiends of the Greenbelt (FROG), a Rockridge-Temescal group whose goal is to support the new Rockridge Greenbelt park (see story, page 7).

As Chair of RCPC, her priorities include plans to work closely with developers to assure that projects conform to the Rockridge Area Plan and the C-31 zoning designation for College Avenue. She also wants to build a closer relationship with the Rockridge Merchants Association (RAMPA) which has been supportive of RCPC events like the Halloween parade. "My ongoing challenge will be to make RCPC even more representative of the community. We need greater participation in elections and more volunteers on our committees," she said.

A native of New York, Susan visited friends in Rockridge over a decade ago, "fell in love with the neighborhood, bought property and moved in." She worked as a French and Spanish teacher for private schools and for two years administered after-school programs for OUSD.

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Lake Merritt In Jeopardy

Proposed residential tower blights historic skyline

by Kevin Flynn

Oakland is the only city in the world with a natural saltwater lake in its city center. In addition, Lake Merritt is the oldest officially declared wildfowl sanctuary in the United States. The lake has long been considered the "Jewel" of the City. It is now in danger from our elected City officials.

As part of Mayor Jerry Brown's 10K Plan (the effort to bring 10,000 new residents to downtown Oakland), the city plans to sell the Fire Alarm Building, located between Lake Merritt and the Alameda County Courthouse on Oak Street.

The City is currently negotiating with Lalanne Volckman and E.M. Johnson

See "Save Lake Merritt," page 7

Fund Raising for the Greenbelt Park

FROG Jumps Off to a Good Start

by Jacqueline Hoeppner-Freitas,
Event Chair, DNA Chair

On Sunday, July 30, FROG (FRiends of the Greenbelt) jump-started its fund-raising efforts for the new Rockridge Temescal Greenbelt Park with a highly successful Flea Market Bazaar in the Claremont DMV parking lot. The event attracted more than 600 people and netted over $4,000 to benefit construction of the park. Once completed, the park will run along Temescal Creek for four blocks, connecting Hardy and Redondo Parks.

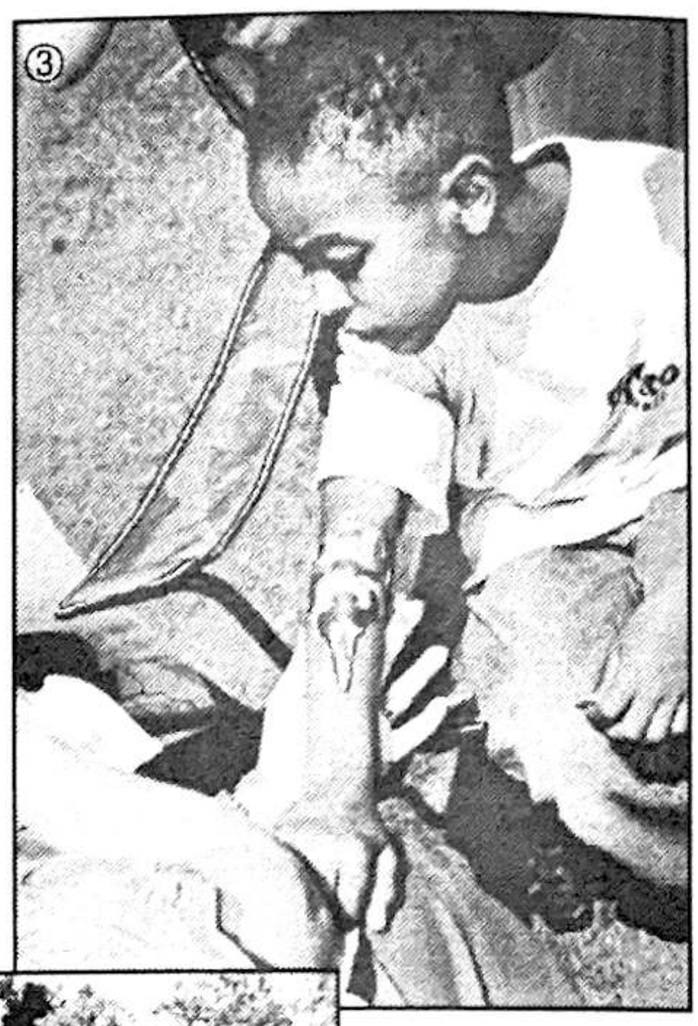
Joining forces to make the day fun and profitable were neighbors, merchants, the Rockridge Community Planning Council, the DMV Neighbors Association, Friends of Temescal Creek, City of Oakland Parks and Recreation Department, and the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Under sunny skies, parents were busy at the flea market selling and buying bargains, while children jumped off excess energy in the Jumping Castle sponsored by Childrens' Hospital, explored the Fire Safety House provided by the Oakland Fire Department, interacted with the Oakland Police Department's talking police car, and ate ice cream donated by Dreyer's.

While listening to the tunes of the Baguette Quartette and The King Bees, everyone enjoyed pasta and chicken —prepared by Albino Gabrielli and donated by the Colombo Club — and a Paula Silver Caesar Salad with ingredients donated by Market Hall Produce and the Pasta Shop. To top off the feast, many indulged in gourmet dessert cannoli prepared, served and donated by Robert Brower.

A raffle of donated items and gift certificates from Rockridge and Temescal merchants was a great success. The raffle culminated in Jeanne Clausen's winning a cool red scooter donated by Hank and Frank Bicycles. FROG Chair Steve Costa arranged a display of the park design and provided information about additional donation opportunities. Many people said

See "FROG Hops," page 6







Photos:
Susan Montauk
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Neighbors and friends attending the FROG Flea Market Bazaar enjoyed themselves on a sunny afternoon in the Claremont Avenue DMV parking lot, helping raise funds for the Rockridge Temescal Greenbelt Park.

① Ginny Lackner gives a good sales pitch, but her sign says it all.

② Maybe not the Sopranos, but definitely the stalwarts of the Colombo Club cruising the food stalls. From left, Marcello Pilap, Lorenzo Marchi, John Penna, and Mike Gasparro.

③ Fanuel Alem fervently hopes the design will never wash off.

④ FROG fund raising crowds had a choice of activities at the event: eat; shop; talk; walk.

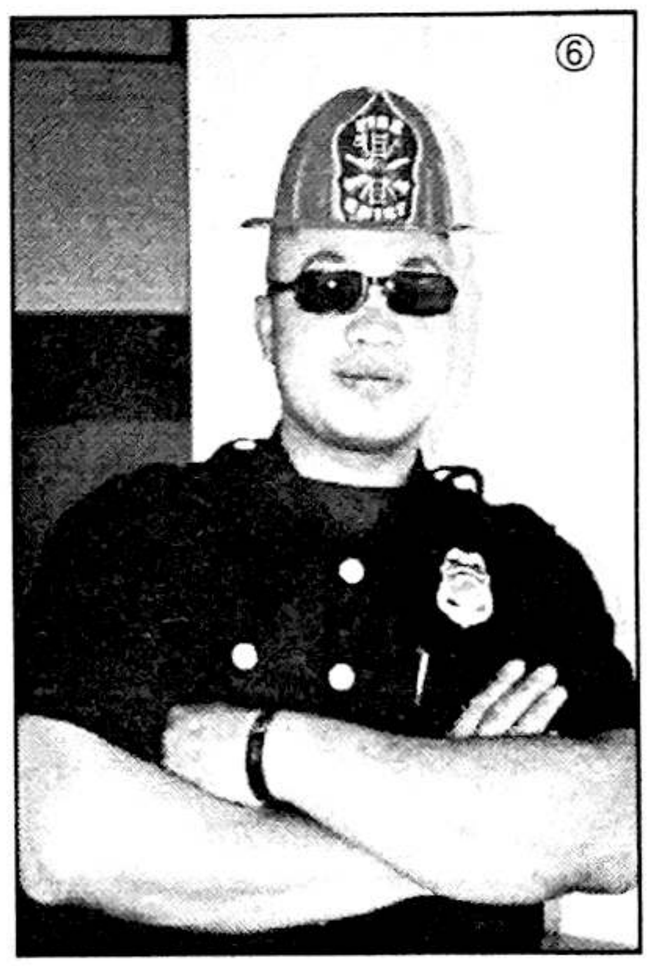
⑤ Maybe he didn't say it, but surely Ryan Williams is thinking, "Not such a big bite, Dad!"

⑥ Philosophers could debate whether firefighter Bao To's head is too big or his hat too small, but his exhibit on kid's fire safety was just the right size.

⑦ Mavis McClellan, flower child for a day.







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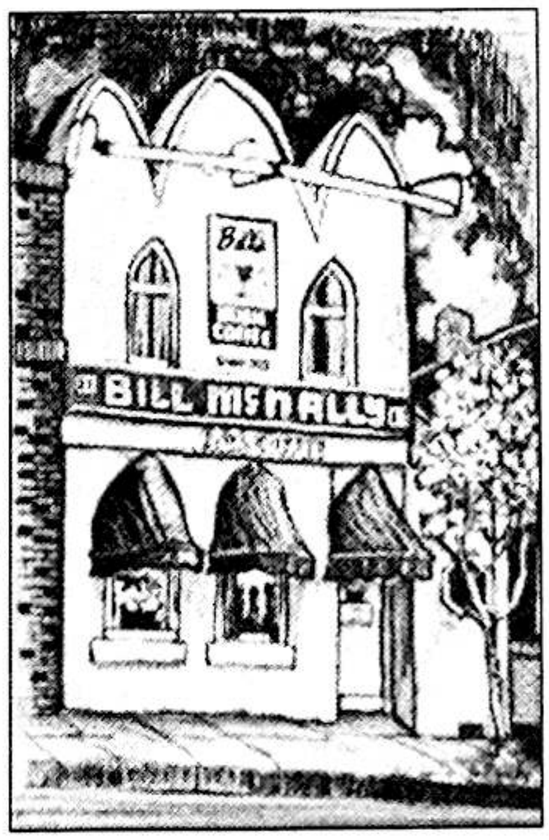
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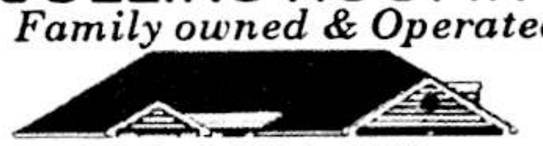
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From September through December, 2000, 15 local Rockridge and Temescal restaurants are offering a 10% discount when diners present a Friends of the Greenbelt (FROG) Restaurant Discount Card. Proceeds from card sales go directly toward funding of our new Greenbelt Park that will run from Hardy Park to Redondo along the old Temescal creek path.

Cards may be purchased for $20. Inside is a directory of restaurants and the months they are participating. Present your FROG card upon receipt of the check and you will receive 10% off your total before taxes. Eat out as often as you like. Get your card right away to take advantage of the full four months. What better way to support your community and enjoy the flavor of the neighborhood as well? *Bon Appetit!*

Participating Restaurants:

Asmara Eritrean & Ethiopian Cuisine, Claremont Diner, Creme de la Creme, Giglio's, King Shang, Las Palmas, Nan Yang, Oliveto's Cafe, Pasta Pomodoro, Red Tractor, Rockridge Steak Bistro, Rustica Conga Lounge, Sabuy Sabuy, Spasso, and Tachibana.

Cards can be purchased at Spasso, 6021 College Avenue or at Red Tractor, 5634 College Avenue or by mail. Call 420-1375 for information.

Send $20 check to: FROG Restaurant Discount Card, 5690 Ocean View Drive, Oakland, CA 94618.

Leap on the FROG Bandwagon With A FRiends Of the Greenbelt T-Shirt

FRiends Of the Greenbelt T-shirts make a fashion statement. Your purchase helps fund equipment purchases and amenities for the new Greenbelt (from Hardy Park to Redondo). Wear the FROG and everyone will know that you support the Rockridge-Temescal park!



T-shirt Order Form

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Indicate quantity in each size: 2T ☐ 4T ☐ (Total ☐ X $10 = $ _____)

Total @$15 _____ + Total @$10_____ = Grand Total = $_____

Mail check to: FROG T-SHIRT, 5690 Ocean View, Oakland, CA 94618.

Call 420-1375 for information.

FROG Hops

from page 6

they attended the event specifically to support the Greenbelt Park. "I thought the best part of the day was seeing how many people were interested in helping restore [Temescal] Creek," said Bruce Douglas, President of Friends of Temescal Creek.

FROG will continue its fund-raising by selling FROG T-shirts (see coupon above), thanks to Eileen Fitz-Faulkner and designer Stacy Mar. It will also sell FROG Restaurant Discount Cards (see left column), and publicize donation opportunities. Look for more information in future issues of *The Rockridge News* about how to secure your claim to fame by "buying" a park bench or contributing to a children's play structure.

FROG's goal is to raise $75,000 to augment $400,000 in funds already approved by the Oakland City Council. Your donation, made out to RCPC/Park Fund and sent to 5856 College Avenue #130, Oakland, California 94618, will help make our Greenbelt Park an enjoyable destination for all residents of Rockridge and Temescal.

Particular thanks for helping to coordinate the flea market/bazaar go to Carol McClellan and Susan Montauk. FROG also thanks all neighbors, organizations and merchants who joined forces to improve our Greenbelt Park!

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CCAC Plans

from page 1

has serious implications for the broader community. If this definition were to be applied to other corner lots under the same ownership separated by an intervening street, what is to stop a developer from continuing a project down an arterial such as College or Claremont? Of immediate concern, for example, CCAC has purchased property next to the proposed dorm site. What are CCAC's future plans? Will this site also be declared eligible for high density development? The answer has profound implications for Rockridge. RCPC believes a more appropriate classification for the dormitory project is "residential rooming house" under zoning designation R-60, which has more restrictive density and parking requirements.

For this reason — and others pertaining to design, density and parking — RCPC opposes the project and has drafted a letter to the Planning Commission outlining its position. If, as anticipated, the Planning Commission approves the project, RCPC or the neighbors would appeal. RCPC commends CCAC for having held past meetings with RCPC and neighbors and hopes the exchange will continue. It is hoped that the appeal process and public meetings will help clarify issues and lead to amicable resolution.

RCPC commends CCAC for having held meetings with RCPC and neighbors in an effort to accommodate concerns. It is hoped that the appeal process and the RCPC general meeting on September 21, 7:30 p.m. in the Rockridge Library will help articulate problems and lead to amicable resolution.

The September 21 RCPC General Meeting in the Rockridge Library will be devoted exclusively to a public hearing of the issues. Representatives of CCAC, RCPC, concerned neighbors and the Oakland Planning Commission will be there. Please plan to attend. The meeting begins promptly at 7:30 pm.

Save Lake Merritt

from page 3

Alliance who plan to build a 190-unit residential tower on the site, whose 26-stories would soar higher than the Alameda County Courthouse. The project would also include a Native American Museum and some senior housing. The Fire Alarm Building would be demolished for this project.

The Fire Alarm Building, designed by famous Oakland architect Walter Mathews, served as the City's emergency response center from 1911 until 1983. The building as it stands today is so unobtrusive that it seems a visual extension of Lakeside Park. In excellent condition, it would easily serve as a museum or an adjunct to the Library. Preservationist organizations like the Oakland Heritage Alliance (OHA) oppose the project because in addition to losing the Fire Alarm Building, it would damage an architecturally significant and historic area of well-designed public buildings — the Alameda County Courthouse, the Library, the Camron-Stanford House, and the Oakland Museum.

In addition to preservationists, other groups oppose the project as well. A group has formed: Coalition of Advocates for Lake Merritt (CALM) made up of a broad cross-section of individuals and organizations. CALM includes the Lake Merritt Rowing Club, the Camron-Stanford House, Citizens for Oakland's Open Space (COOS) and individuals such as John Sutter, former City Councilmember, and Assemblyperson Audie Bock.

CALM, which views the site as parkland, opposes private development on the city-owned site as an inappropriate use of public land. They support the protection and preservation of Lake Merritt and its surrounding parklands and open space.

Although Lake Merritt is not in Rockridge's backyard, it belongs to all of us. If you believe that the piecemeal selling of public resources to private development is wrong, then I urge you to contact Oakland City Councilmember Jane Brunner, our neighbor and representative for the Rockridge area. Her phone number is 238-7001.

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Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

The Burger Wars

Nearly 35 years ago, when my wife and I became engaged, we celebrated by having hamburgers at our local Brooklyn White Castle. More recently, after our daughter's wedding, we craved hamburger at the Smokehouse on Telegraph Avenue. Alice Waters, thank you for giving us California cuisine, but, bottom-line, it's the hamburger that fills my culinary soul.

If not for Alice Water's culinary revolution, California's gastronomic contribution to American cuisine would be the hamburger. No single food item defined the post-World War II California life-style as the hamburger and it is still thought by many to be the quintessential California food item. Consider this Rockridge fact: eight restaurants on College Avenue feature hamburgers on the menu; for four of these restaurants, hamburgers are the signature dish.

Americans on average eat 3 hamburgers a week. McDonald's alone has sold 12 hamburgers for every person in the WORLD. Hamburgers account for nearly 60% of all the sandwiches eaten. So the next time you eat a hamburger, remember it's not just a "burger," it's an economy. Based on these facts, consider how much the hamburger contributes to the Rockridge College Avenue economy.

The origin of the hamburger is clouded in history. What we do know is that sometime in the mid-nineteenth century, German immigrants, from the seaport city of Hamburg, brought a dish to America called "hamburger steak." By 1890, a cooked beef patty version appeared on a menu in New York's famous Delmonico Restaurant. The hamburger bun was introduced at the 1904 St. Louis World Fair. Mass distribution of the hamburger started with White Castle in 1921. The tiny hamburger on a bun sold for 5 cents. The 1930s saw the advent of the drive-in. Drive-in's changed the landscape of burgers forever by allowing diners to remain in their cars and thereby creating the concept of drive-up service that remains the mainstay of the fast food industry. By the mid-1950s McDonald's golden arches became as famous a symbol of America as the bald eagle.

Let's begin our College Avenue hamburger tour with Rocky's. Rocky's is the commensurate California "hole in the wall" hamburger joint. Priced at $4.50, Rocky's offers 10 varieties of a 1/3 pound 100% pure ground chuck hamburger with the standard fixings of lettuce, tomato, onion an pickle. Seating at Rocky's is all *al fresco*. Bear bones and basic, Rocky's is always good for down to earth burger.

A family favorite since 1973, our neighborhood namesake — the Rockridge Café — is always a good choice for a near perfect flavorful, juicy grilled hamburger. The Rockridge Café serves eight varieties of a 6-ounce hamburger for $4.50. The 12-ounce jumbo burger goes for $6.95. I love the family crowd at the Rockridge Café and of course you cannot beat their fresh fruit pies. What could more all-American: Burger, fries and warm apple pie with vanilla ice cream?

Next we come to the Mecca of Bay Area hamburger restaurants — Barney's. Count 'em: Barneys offers 27 beef hamburgers, 22 chicken/turkey burgers, 9 garden/tofu burgers, and 4 portabello mushroom burgers. Check out the Milano Burger made with roasted eggplant, zucchini with a tomato pesto sauce which is also available as a chicken or garden burger. Barney's consistently wins "Best of the Bay" from the Bay Guardian and East Bay Express.

At the Claremont/College intersection we find the Claremont Diner. Designed as a classic train-car diner, the Claremont Diner features ten 6 and 8 oz hamburgers and 4 garden/turkey burgers served with a variety of fixings. One of the great design features of the Claremont Diner is the classic 50s retro decor and soda fountain, complete with an electric train circling the interior.

Reaching into Greater Rockridge, we find the oldest burger restaurant on College Avenue: The Buttercup, established in 1956. The Buttercup menu features six different open flame cooked 1/3-pound hamburgers. A neighborhood tradition, the Buttercup is always a good choice when you have that yearning for a tasty old-fashioned hamburger.

Whether eating at a restaurant or at home, the ideal grilled burger should be moist, juicy, with a texture that's tender and not dense. A perfect burger is flavorful, with a deeply caramelized reddish brown crust and moist on the inside. The bun, condiments and fixings are equally important.

What matters most in making the perfect hamburger is the cut of meat and fat. Chuck is the best cut of choice for flavor and juiciness. You want to get the meat coarsely ground. Finely ground meet will become soft and mushy. The ideal ratio of fat to lean is 20 percent fat, 80 percent lean. Beef with less fat will become dry when cooked.

Gently toss a portion of meat back and forth between your hands to form a loose ball. Don't overly handle the meat. Lightly flatten into a patty ¾ inch thick and about 4½ inches in diameter. Season with kosher salt, pepper and onion powder. Oil a clean hot grill rack. Grill patties, uncovered, without pressing down on them until well seared on the first side, about 2½ minutes. Flip burgers, continue grilling about 2 minutes for rare, or 3 minutes for medium.

Topping your burger is as important as grilling it. Have a hamburger fixings bar and let your guests assemble their own perfect burger. Always slice your vegetables — tomatoes, avocado, onions, pickles, and lettuce — very thin. Offer different types of ketchups, mustards, and cheeses. And, of course, the bun should be soft, but firm and toasted.

Barry Kaufman is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy

Open Letter to Councilmember Jane Brunner

Thank You for Your Stand Against Chabot Golf Course Transfer

Dear Councilmember Brunner:

First, thank you for your stand against the proposed takeover of the Chabot Golf Course by the KSL group. As further input on this issue, I offer the following?

1. The proposal is based on the premise that "if you build it, they will come." Does this sound a bit like the Raider's deal? If golfers don't come, it won't be because of a boycott. It will be because the players can't afford it.

2. Players now using the course tend to be a blue-collar group. Some people think golfers are rich. Many are, but check the parking lot at the Chabot course; you won't see many expensive cars.

3. Meetings have been held for citizen input. Support for the proposal has been overwhelmingly negative. Yet, citizen input seems to have been for naught. Robert Bobb stands against the opposition in his recommendation for the proposal.

4. An "Independent study" of the course was done by Dick Thorman. Mr. Thorman was hired and paid by the city for his analysis. It turns out he was also involved in the Galbraith and Tony Lema golf courses in the area.

5. From 1991 to 1999, the Chabot course lost $78,845 per year. During those years, the City made almost no improvements and deterioration became evident to the players. During the El Niño winters, the course was nearly unplayable.

6. Should the City subsidize the course? Probably not, but the KSL proposal calls for the City to ante up $2.5 million for the rebuilding. Suppose that money were used to correct three major course problems: new cart paths, a new sprinkler system and an improved drainage system. Would absent players return to the course? Greens fees could then be raised to the levels of surrounding courses.

7. Robert Bobb and Raymond Chester have stated that the high greens fees would support other city programs. "Sure, golfers are rich. Let's sock it to them to pay for other programs." We all favor city recreational programs, but let's all pay for it, not just the golfers. Make Chabot pay for itself, but don't make it a revenue source for the city.

8. The KSL proposal promises 35% of the Tee-times will be held for the public. How is this to be monitored? During what hours will the Tee-times be available?

9. I play at Chabot about three times a month. At $18 per round, this amounts to $645 per year. Under the KSL proposal of $45, it will cost me $1,620 per year, an increase of 136%. As a councilperson, do you see this as fair? Being retired, I could make little use of the "first-class facility," so this resource would be lost to me. I guess the people at the Claremont Hotel can afford it.

10. Does the Chabot course really need two managers: Chester and Rawls?

Thank you for taking these thoughts into consideration.

— Marv Tripp, Golden Gate Avenue

Teen Artists Sought for Teen Read Week Exhibit

Teenagers between the ages of 14 and 19 are invited to submit their artwork illustrating a favorite book or cover art for their favorite book. The title selected should be appropriate reading for kids 14 and older. Entries may be a drawing, painting, collage, cartoon or calligraphy of any size of color. Entries are limited to one per person. Teen artists should include one or two sentences citing the name of the book and how their artwork relates to that book.

Artwork meeting these specifications will be displayed at the Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library during Teen Read Week, October 15-21. Bring artwork to the Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Avenue, between September 5 and October 8. Artwork must be accompanied by an entry form available at the library. For more information, call Donna Mandel at the library, 597-5017.

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Looking Backward: 2000-1887



Unknown Children with Apples, c.1900, SF Bay Area. Photograph printed directly from the original glass plate negative by John Bosko, 9/99.

"'I left my man Sawyer orders to call me at nine o'clock. What has become of Sawyer?'"

— Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888)

On September 10, 2000, a physician in Boston, digging in the yard behind his house, discovered a large underground vault. Upon gaining entrance to the chamber, he was astonished to find a sleeping man, clad in an old-fashioned dressing gown. Using his medical knowledge, he managed to awaken the man from what seemed to be a mesmeric trance.

The unearthed gentleman, one Julian West, woke up at first much piqued, supposing that his manservant had gone off and left him sleeping past the appointed time. But soon, looking out upon a Boston skyline transformed beyond all recognition, he could not deny the truth: he had slept 113 years.

(Julian West's own house and manservant, it appeared, had been destroyed by fire in the early hours of May 31, 1887, soon after he retired to his underground sleeping chamber in search of a night's rest. Since no one else knew that the chamber existed, everyone must have supposed that he too had perished in the fire.)

So begins Edward Bellamy's utopian novel, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* (1888), one of the most famous and popular books of its time. The book no longer has the immense profile it once enjoyed; but it is still highly readable, and memorable for its relaxed perambulations through a sunlit future. Throughout, the inhabitants of the year 2000 refer to the 19th century — to them, a dark period almost as faint in memory as the Middle Ages — in tones of sympathetic detachment. At the close of the book, Julian West, as the first-person narrator, bursts forth like an angry prophet, excoriating 19th century civilization, with its unbridled capitalism, its economic booms and busts, and its genteel classes moving in comfort and unconcern past the desperate and downtrodden.

For Bellamy, commercialism was at the root of the society's evils. He imagined a not-far-off future in which commerce, money, war, and even lawyers, legislation, and politicians, would all be eliminated. All resources would be nationalized, all waste would disappear, and all livelihoods would be carried out through service in an "industrial army." Society would be vastly more productive. Everyone would be able to achieve his or her potential.

Against this surprising background, *Looking Backward* lays out some shrewd prognostications about the future direction of society, and especially the conditions of ordinary life. The modern reader feels a twinge of recognition when reading of the increase of leisure time, the vast reduction of household labor, the ease of shopping, and the virtual disappearance of servants. Universal access to education, the late commencement of careers, early retirement, and increased opportunities for cultivating individual tastes and interests, all feel like familiar ground. And one is struck, in a book written 112 years ago, to find the characters tuning in to symphony concerts from the comfort of the living room or the bedroom.

See "Looking Backward," page 15



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20% increase in the median price of a Rockridge home!

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The Power of Language

Recently, CCAC graduate Megan Shapiro was sent on a unique assignment: The city of Bremen, Germany, is constructing a museum dedicated entirely to sound and language. Her job would be to try to record some phrases spoken in forty three languages here in the Bay Area. In Bremen you would then, by touching the Bay Area on a huge globe, be able to listen to the multilingual sound of our environment here.

I suggested that she take her tape recorder and just walk down College Avenue with it. She did, and the job turned out to be a "piece of cake." Forty-three languages! Wow! How ironic that



museum visitors in Bremen will hear all this so much more clearly than we. Most of us feel quite comfortable in the surround-sound of English which seems to gradually drown out all other nuances of language. It seems to be getting harder and harder to pay attention.

Language Matters

Language is probably the most important tool we humans possess to shape and reveal the construct of our minds, to communicate. Languages matter. They hold our unique heritage, our most sacred thoughts, our identity. To know the language of your fathers is to know yourself. To learn a language other than your own is to celebrate the rich diversity of human life. To obliterate a language is to expunge the soul of a people.

Dictators have always known this, but it is not so easy to do. In Latvia, for example, despite eight centuries of foreign domination and decades of deliberate Russofication, the Latvian language, a unique Indo-European language, was never forgotten. When it was not possible to speak it aloud , it was whispered. When it was not taught in the schools and books were burned, scholars and writers preserved it. Its message of freedom and hope was passed on undetected in poems and songs, sleeping there, waiting. When we visited Latvia in 1991, just at the end of the Soviet era, the universal language was Russian, so I had no opportunity to practice even the little Latvian I know. When we returned this summer, we found that in less than ten years as an independent democracy, the entire population of 2,500,000 people had reverted to Latvian.

At the national Songfest that took place there in July, 30,000 singers raised their voices in Latvian in jubilant praise of freedom and love for their homeland. Jews, Armenians, and so many others who have been dispossessed in this past century know this feeling well.

Indigenous Festivals

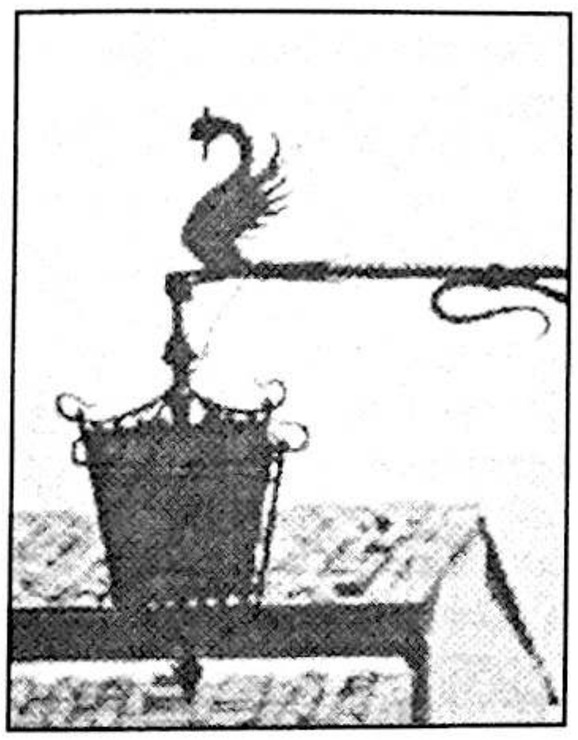
From now through October 7, Pro Arts will host a series of weekly indigenous festivals in the context of an exhibition of contemporary art that reaches for its inspiration back into the spiritual and cultural language of Oakland's diverse ancestry. Featured artists will be Kim Anno, Glenn Rogers, Rabbett Strickland, Juana Alicia, Woody Johnson, Kumar Lama, Ed NoiseCat, George Valris.

☞ **On September 23**, Master Kumar Lama from Nepal will conduct a Thangka Painting Workshop (advance registration required).

☞ **A spectacular Powwow** celebrating native American culture featuring singing and drumming by All Nations will take place on September 30.

☞ **A Music Offering to Ifa**, the traditional wisdom of the Yoruba, featuring the group Trust, is scheduled for October 7. Call 763-4361 for more on this.

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Tai Ji Quan

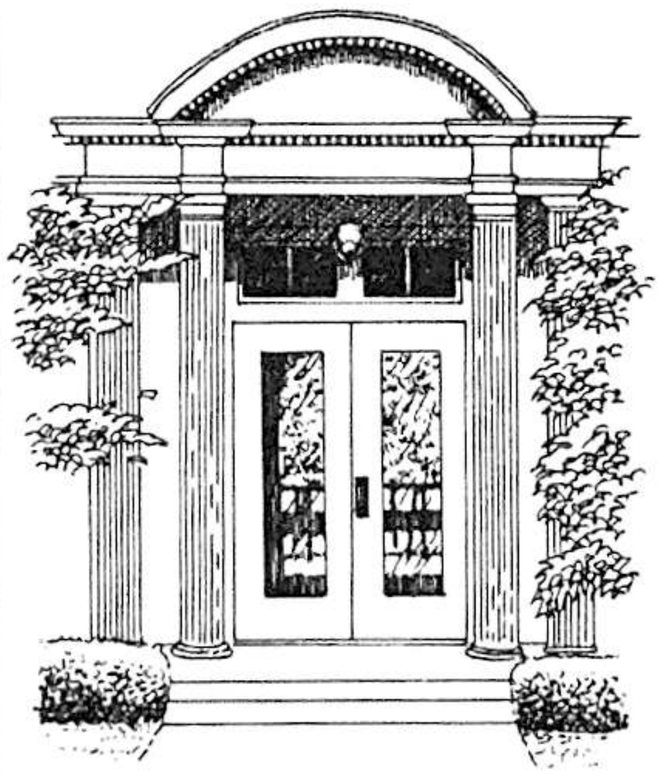
In Rockridge at Danspace. New. Beginning morning classes starting in September, 7:15 to 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Vitalize your life! Low-impact, grounding, meditative movement. Instructor has 20 years experience. Karen 601-1619.

Office Manager Position Available

The College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue, is looking for an Office Manager with bookkeeping and computer experience. $1,499/month. Stimulating and meaningful work in a supportive atmosphere. Call 658-3665 for more information.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

BANANAS Workshop

5232 Claremont Avenue, 658-7101 Monday, September 25, 7-9 p.m: Workshop – "Where Do Babies Come From-Talking About Sex with Children;" Wednesdays, September 13-October 25, 7-9 p.m: "Learn Positive Parenting Techniques: A Great Eight Week Class."

College Avenue Adult Activities Center

College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5955 College Ave. All activities Wednesdays, 11-noon. Lunch follows, $1.75. Slide (SS) and video (V) shows in Lighthouse Room.

Sep 13: (SS) "Vietnam," Cathy Connelly
Sep 20: (V) "Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Labrador-Part I," Dan Cooper
Sep 27: (V) "Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Labrador-Part II," Dan Cooper
Oct 4: (SS) "Western United States," Charlie Fitch

Fire Ecology Hikes At Merritt College Environmental Center

Take hikes and do hands-on work in the hills and along the creeks. An exciting new partnership centered at Merritt College's Environmental Center will be hosting outdoor activities this Fall. Call Bruce Douglas at Friends of Temescal Creek for information, 655-0341.

Rockridge Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

Story Times, September, 2000:

Toddler Story Times: Saturday mornings, 10:30 a.m., 9/2 and 9/30;

Pre-School Story Times: Tuesdays: 10:30 & 11:00 a.m., 9/19;

Pajama Story Times: Wednesdays: at 7:00 p.m., 9/13 and 9/27.

The Library will be closed on Saturday, September 9.

Book Discussion Group:

Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m: Sept. 13, *The Great Gatsby* by Fitzgerald; Oct. 4, *The Trial* by Kafka; Oct. 18, *Seize the Day* by Bellow; Nov. 1, *Hedda Gabler* by Ibsen & *St. Joan* by Shaw. Call 597-5017.

Lawyers in the Library

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

Temescal Creek Clean-up

Volunteer on Saturday morning, September 16! Keep our Temescal Creek & Greenbelt Clean Creek to Bay Day is Saturday, September 16, 9:00 a.m. to noon. Come volunteer to clean and clear Temescal Creek and the greenbelt between Redondo Park and Clifton Street. Meet behind the Claremont DMV. Volunteers will receive a T-shirt and a coupon for a Brita water bottle. Oakland Public Works Adopt-a-Creek program will provide tools and gloves, but bring a wheelbarrow if you can to help stack (not bag) green waste. Councilmember Jane Brunner will provide morning refreshments. Neighbors will put on a potluck immediately following the cleanup. All are welcome to the potluck; bring a favorite dish to share. Utensils, drinks and dessert will be donated by the DMV Neighbors Association.

Toastmasters

Early risers: Conquer your fear of public speaking and develop leadership skills in a supportive, relaxed and friendly environment. Join Toastmasters. 7:00 a.m. every Thursday. Please call 251-3066 or email: spk2@flash.net

Jane Brunner North Oakland Community Meeting

Saturday, October 7, 10:00 a.m.-12 noon at Peralta Elementary School, 460 63rd Street. Topic to be announced.

NCPC Meetings

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

Halloween Parade Planning

Please volunteer to help with this year's Rockridge Halloween Parade by attending a planning meeting 7:00 p.m., September 11, upstairs in the Rockridge Library. Help make the parade a very special treat for the kids. For more info, Call Barbara Stewart at 601-1237.

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Letter to The Editor

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

I'm Proud CCAC is in My Neighborhood

To the Editor:

I'm angered by the innuendo regarding the character of the C.C.A.C student body. C.C.A.C is world renowned for attracting the best and the brightest. Internationally, its alumni list reads like a "Who's Who" of modern art.

Perhaps the real reason why some are opposed is the fact that a large number of students using the dorm will be minorities.

C.C.A.C is a wonderful representative of Oakland and I'm proud it's in my neighborhood.

Sincerely,
May Owen
Terrace Street Neighbor

Lillian's Children's Store Owner To Make Emergency Trip to Africa

Family devastated by illness

by Mary True

Lillian Wamalwa of Lillian's on College Avenue is returning to Kenya for several weeks to care for family members suffering from AIDS.

Lillian, a beloved member of the Rockridge community, has worked on College Avenue for 17 years since coming to the United States from Kenya. She first worked at O'Toole's children's resale shop and then, with the help of local friends, took over the shop in 1995, renaming it Lillian's Children's Store.

This is her first trip back to her homeland. Her sister (mother of two young children) was recently diagnosed with AIDS and her brother and his wife were also diagnosed this past year. Lillian is the main surviving female in her family, and family support is critical to getting medical help and care in Africa.

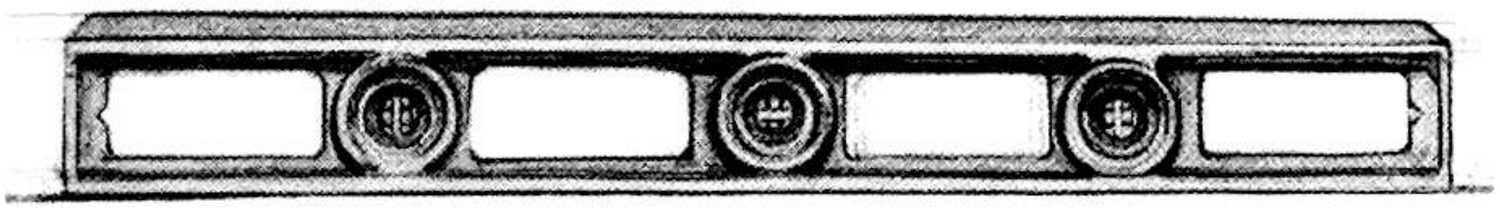

Lillian Wamalwaw

As part of my work, I have spent time in Africa, and I can't convey how difficult and expensive it is to get medical care. Right now a pill to cure a secondary infection costs $12 and the minimum dosage is 10 pills. This is equivalent to several month's income for most Kenyans.

I am writing to let friends of Lillian know that she will be gone for five weeks starting September 15, but the shop will remain open.

Also, I am sure she will appreciate notes, calls, and any assistance possible at this difficult time. Her phone number is 428-1009, and her address is Lillian's Children's Store, 5638 College Ave, Oakland, CA 94618.

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Public Forum to Consider Pussycat Site as Temescal Gateway

by Thad Shaffer

What would you like to see happen at the vacant lot — the former Pussycat Theatre site — at 51st and Telegraph? Temescal Neighbors Together (TNT) is sponsoring two September meetings in Temescal where you can express your visions and concerns for this important site, and also get updated on the current status of the property.

The first meeting will be on Tuesday evening, September 12th, 7 p.m., at the Temescal Café, 4920 Telegraph Avenue. The second will be on Saturday morning, September 16th, 10 a.m., at the Primitive Baptist Church, corner of Rich and 42nd Streets.

Both meetings will include a discussion of the Community Position Paper, which is being prepared for presentation to the owners of the site. Also on the agenda will be a brief presentation by O'Dog, a group lobbying the city for more dog parks in Oakland, including one proposed for Mosswood Park.

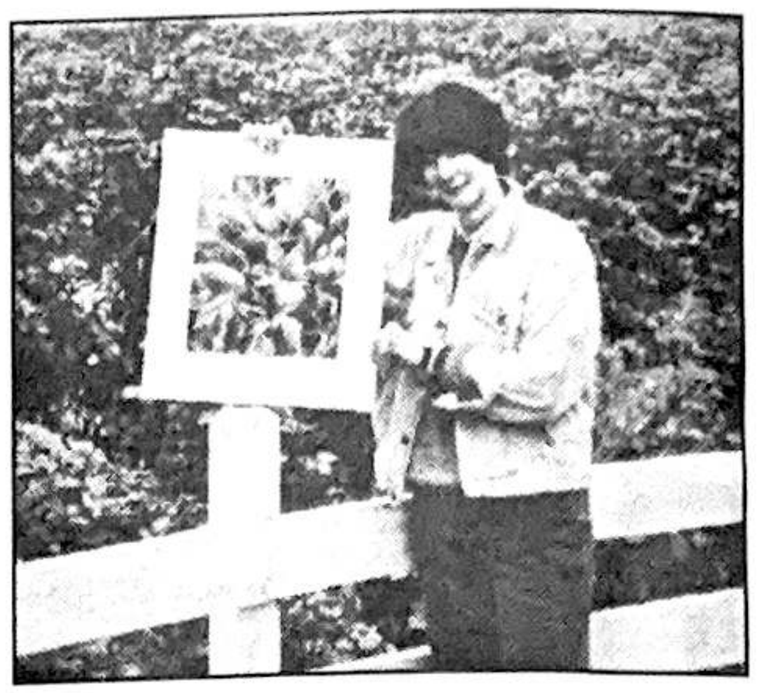
With the additional community input, the Position Paper will be finalized and presented to the public on Thursday, September 28th, 7:30 pm, at Faith Presbyterian Church, 49th and Webster. Please mark these meeting dates on your calendar, and join your neighbors for a lively discussion. For information, call 547-4104.

Development Principles

A group called the North Oakland Neighborhoods has been formed to assure proper development of the old Pussycat Theater site at 51st and Telegraph. Their goal is to create a project that serves as a "signature gateway to the Temescal District." Values the group feels should guide site development include:

- Extensive community participation
- Mixed-use development reflecting neighborhood diversity, and encouraging people to gather;
- Join the Children's Hospital parking lot and former theater parking lot;
- Incorporate Temescal Creek now running under the site;
- Reflect architectural quality and enhance the neighborhood;
- Encourage pedestrian and bicycle use and "meet the street" rather than have a parking lot adjacent to the street;

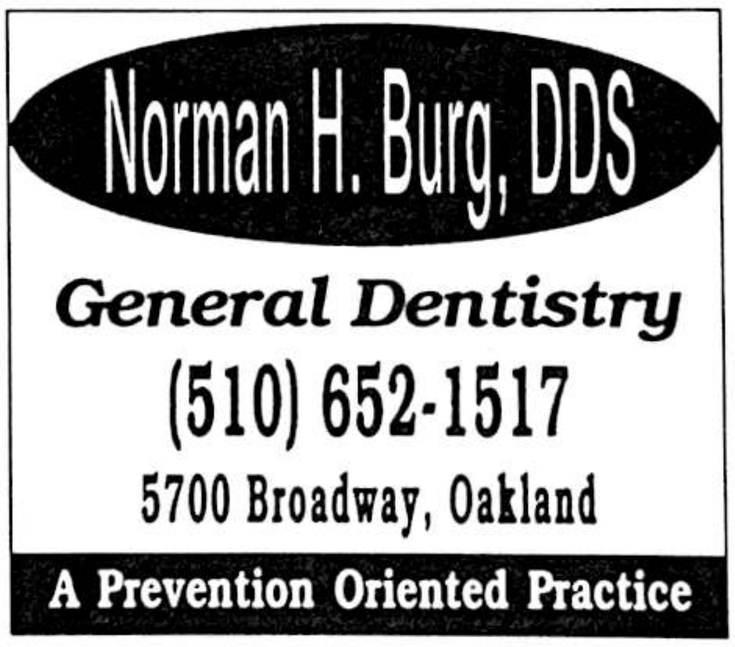
For more information, call 601-6465.



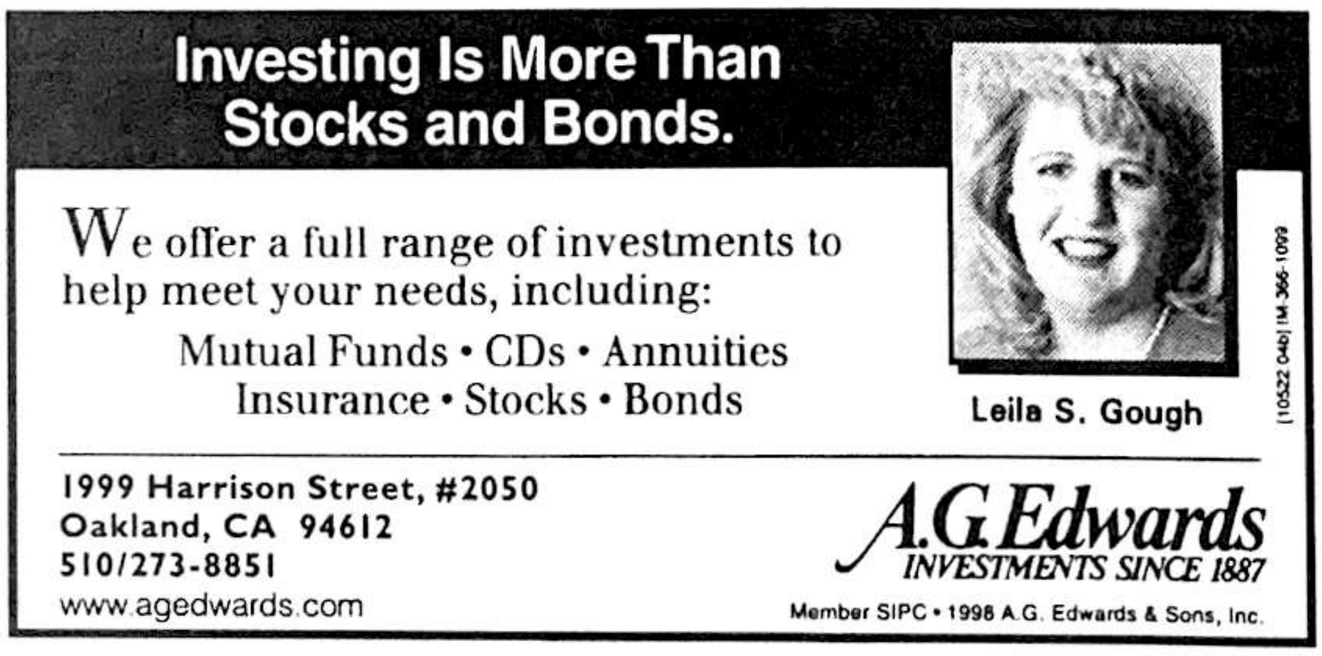
MENDO-SCENE-OH!

Rockridge artist Gerta Faber's watercolor, "Harmony," moved north with the Wests last spring. Trish and Charlie thank RCPC for this wonderful gift, shown here on the Mendocino Headlands. It will always remind them of their 14 happy years in Rockridge.









Looking Backward

from page 10

...an endlessly productive society...whose products were seldom touched by human minds or hands, and do not answer to human needs or values.

Bellamy's utopia can also be rather quaint. During the past hundred years, the knowledge explosion, the rate of technological progress, and the multiplication of specialties and career paths, have far outstripped anything imagined by Bellamy and his contemporaries. But the backwardness of the technological vision is fitting: after all, much of the technological development of the past century is a byproduct of the same commercialized society that Bellamy wanted to abolish.

Interestingly, all this hindsight does not make the book seem less relevant. It still challenges the reader's imagination and belief, but in a different way. Like Julian West himself, the book can be said to have a second career.

Bellamy's vision was daring in its assumptions, both about the possibility of social improvements, and about the speed with such improvements could materialize. When the book was published, a reviewer in the Boston Transcript commented that, more likely, 75 centuries would be needed in order for society to evolve to the state envisioned by Bellamy.

Now, in the true year 2000, a reader is apt to feel that what much of what once seemed like improbable fiction in Bellamy is not so far beyond reach. From the present vantage point, the level of societal wealth envisioned by Bellamy is hardly unbelievable; if anything, it seems almost familiar. We may be far from achieving social justice, or extinguishing social conflict, and even farther from abolishing money; but much of the picture drawn by Bellamy no longer strikes the mind as simply utopian.

More challenging to today's reader is the idea of a society which has such vast levels of output and consumption, and which, at the same time, is as tranquil and spiritually well-centered as the late 20th century America in *Looking Backward*. One chortles at Bellamy's Americans of the year 2000, emancipated from tiresome labor and surrounded by a cornucopia of choice goods, all the while measuring and curtailing their appetites, un-distracted by superfluity or artificial wants. Here, Bellamy does offend our sense of probability. To us, a high level of material progress seems to go hand-in-hand with relentless economic and social churning, which can hardly be controlled, and which, left unchecked, deforms both the natural and human environments. If Bellamy's idea of progress embodied the hope for human control over human destiny, or even a modicum of human restraint, then the lapse of four or five generations has been enough to unbundle that idea.

The current state of affairs was better evoked by Hannah Arendt when she wrote, in *The Human Condition* (1958), of an evermore productive society, its need for human labor shrinking away, approaching a state of painless and effortless consumption. Such a society, she said, would be free to "consume" the whole world and to reproduce daily all things it wished to consume. How many things would appear and disappear daily and hourly in the life process of such a society... [The rhythm of machines would magnify and intensify the natural rhythm of life enormously, but it would not change, only make more deadly, life's chief character with respect to the world... such a society, dazzled by the abundance of its growing fertility and caught in the smooth functioning of a never-ending process, would no longer be able to recognize its own futility — the futility of a life which [quoting Adam Smith] "does not fix or realize itself in any permanent subject which endures after [its] labour is past."

More than anything in Bellamy, it is Arendt's vision that one easily recognizes in the actual year 2000: a society caught up in a machine, and tied to the spinning wheels of production and consumption — an endlessly productive society, but one whose products were seldom touched by human minds or hands, and do not answer to human needs or values.

How long will the next Julian West need to be preserved, until it is otherwise?

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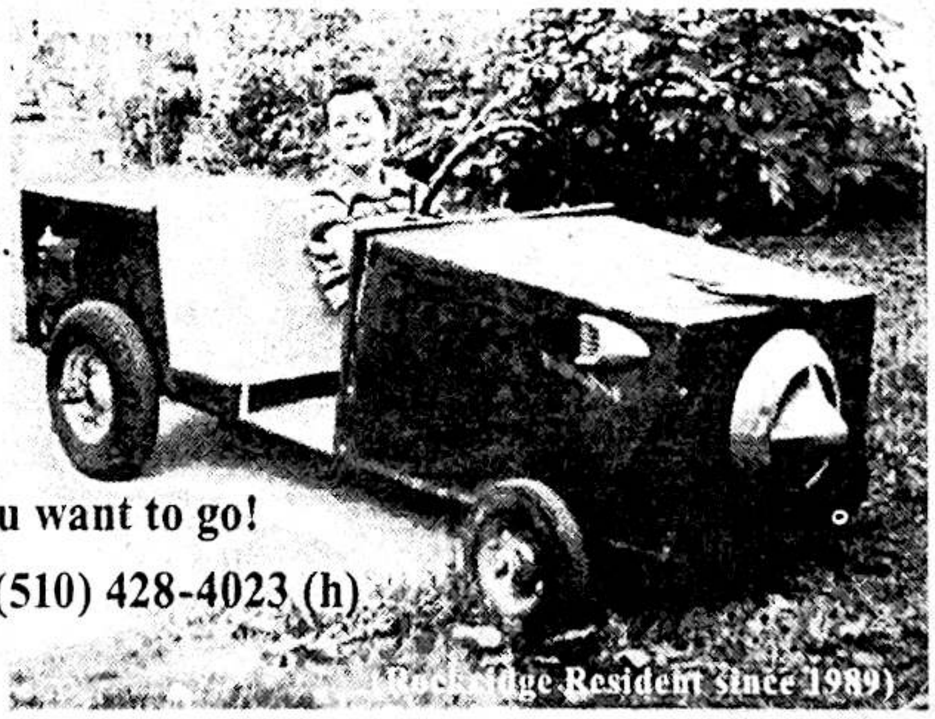
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