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THE Rockridge News

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RCPC General Meeting Agenda

Thursday, November 16, 7:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library
Community Room
5366 College Avenue (at Manila)

■ **Three Community Issues Set for Meeting Debate**

■ **PLAY STRUCTURE:** FROG (Friends of the Rockridge/Temescal Greenbelt) takes a look at some examples of Robert Leathers' famous community-built play structures and asks: "Should we hire this firm to help community volunteers design and build children's play structures at the new greenbelt park?" (See article, page 3);

■ **New Zoning Laws**: Will the proposed one-size-fits-most residential design review program be best for Oakland? Although the S-14 firestorm zone would be eliminated with these new standards, many of its key provisions would be applied Citywide. (See article, page 1);

■ **Golf Course Lease:** BONC (Berkeley Oakland Neighbors of the Claremont) addresses the issues of the pending lease of the Chabot Golf Course to the KSL Corporation which owns the Claremont Hotel. Is the proposed expansion of the hotel connected to the golf course lease and what might be the consequences for Claremont neighbors and present users of the greens? (See article, page 4).

Oakland Zoning Standards to be Tightened for Additions, Second Stories and Monster Homes

Oakland City Council gets proposals for streamlining design review process for one- and two-unit residences

by Cy Gulassa

It does happen: You're in your modest hill home when suddenly on a small lot across the street a monster house rears up. It not only violates the character of your street, it blocks your view and permanently shades your sunny deck. Or you live among charming, one-story craftsman homes when a neighbor's house sprouts a second-story addition, a do-it-yourself square box sided in plywood. Maybe it even features a giant window that peers into your bedroom. You soon learn that there may not be anything in existing zoning regulations or the design review program to prevent or ameliorate these aesthetic abominations. No notification required. No appeal permitted. It's all legal.

Recognizing the inadequacy and confusion of the existing ten-tract design review program, the City Council in 1996 created the Residential Design Review Working Group and instructed it to work with the Planning Commission and the Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA) to streamline the design review process and draft reasonable zoning standards that would be applied uniformly throughout the City for single homes and duplexes. The project is part of Phase I of the Zoning Update Project designed to bring existing regulations into conformity with the new General Plan.

See "Zoning Proposals," page 3



PHOTO: CY GULASSA

Leslie Gould, Director of Oakland's Planning and Zoning department, explains the proposed new design review program to a Rockridge/ Temescal audience at Peralta Elementary October 14, sponsored by Councilmember Jane Brunner.

A GATHERING OF GOBLINS

An audience of kids and parents, possibly under the spell of witches and goblins, listens raptly to stories at Diesel books on when it rained on the annual RCPC/Rockridge merchants parade. More pictures of creatures and activities and a full story on page 15.

PHOTO: CY GULASSA



book corner by Gay Ducey Children's Librarian


Chris Ahlstrand

Dear Reader:

Gay Ducey, Rockridge Children's Librarian whose "Book Corner" stories have charmed readers of the The Rockridge News over the last decade, was seriously injured in an automobile accident recently and will be recuperating at home until after the first of the year. Gay has given extraordinary service to the community, especially to Rockridge kids. A master story teller, she delights in reading to children of all ages and has inspired a generation of them to love the magic of books. Cards may be addressed to Gay Ducey, c/o The Rockridge Library, 5366 College Avenue, Oakland, CA 94618. Until Gay is able to resume writing for "The Book Corner," we will present reprints from the archives. Below is the story of intrepid Delilah and her encounter with Sammy, the Spider Dog, originally published October 12, 1996.

Sammy the Halloween Menace

In the neighborhood were we once lived, the place next door was big and dark. There were four kids in the family, all of whom joined ours in kick-the-can each evening. But nobody ever went to their house, even though the backyard was full of trees with climbing branches, access to a stream, and many hidey holes. You see, there was something else there. A truly fearsome dog. The mailman (well, it was a man) delivered just to the curb, and the children called out before stepping onto the porch. The dog's name was Sammy the Biter Dog. He was never about, because they locked him inside and only let him out on a thick chain against which he strained until the spit flew. Sometimes, oh, once a month, they would forget, and then the door would be opened, and before they could grab him, he would snarl and snap his way past them to jump on anything he could see, including cats, kids, adults or tires. His owners always believed the foul beast must have been provoked. The dog had bitten many people, some badly, and the animal control folks visited from time to time but to little effect, for the masters would announce contrition and promise tighter leashing.

But folk process is inevitable and unstoppable, and as the dog's infamy spread, his trespasses increased. Another generation grew into biting range, but they did not call him Sammy the Biter Dog; they referred to him as Sammy the Spider Dog. When I asked, the kids told me it was because his bite was exactly like a Black Widow spider's and you would just drop dead in about fifteen minutes. Seemed plausible to me.

Shortly before Halloween one year, a new family joined the neighborhood. Their child was named Delilah. She was quickly initiated into the important things-the Dip, the candy store, the bus stop bully, and Sammy the Spider Dog. "I am not afraid of dogs; I have a dog," she said.

As was the custom, lots of the kids trick or treated together, and the parents trailed behind. The Sammy house was the third one down, and the parents called out before letting the kids go get their treats, which were always homemade pumpkin cookies. Deep in chat, we approached the porch and were about to call out when the door slammed open and Sammy

See "Gay Ducey," page 13

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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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Publication date of the next issue is
- **December 2, 2000;**
- **December deadline is November 16.**

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

Zoning Proposals

from page 3

The Working Group's preliminary recommendations were presented to the City Council last October. Their premise is that tighter, uniformly enforced standards reduce the need for hearings to resolve problems like those described above. The recommendations fall into three categories:

1) Zoning: By reducing height limits, increasing setbacks, limiting building areas, setting new floor-area to lot ratios, and specifying appearance standards for new construction and remodeling, the new zoning standards would automatically reduce most common problems. House size would be governed by lot size and the increased setbacks and restrictions on buildable areas would reduce impacts on view, solar access, and privacy. The new zoning regulations would also address driveways, garage and carport widths, parking, fences, walls and security bars. By tightening appearance standards, including fit with neighboring structures, the architectural character of existing buildings and neighborhoods would be preserved.

2) Project Review Framework: The proposed design review process would consist of two types, the Administrative Design Review and the Regular Design Review. The Administrative Review would be fast and ultra simple. Any project that meets the new standards would be approved via a simple check off system in 5 to 10 days at minimal cost to both the City and the applicant. Any appeal would be strictly limited to whether or not the project meets the standards. A more complex Regular Design Review would be required for projects that don't meet the standards, or for special situations, such as houses over 5000 square feet or for projects in zones that always require regular design review, including the S-10 Scenic Route Combining Zone. Unlike Administrative Review, the Regular Review process requires notice to neighbors and involves qualitative evaluation and appeal rights. The Working Group consensus is that this two-track program would streamline approval because tightened, uniform standards would reduce the frequency of contested issues. Most projects would require only the semi-automatic Administrative Review, allowing staff to devote more time and attention to problematic projects.

"Extensive construction activity inconsistent with both the existing and proposed standards is occurring in Oakland without permit." CEDA report to City Council, October 3, 2000.

3) Design Guidelines: Design review guidelines would be developed for qualitative issues, such as type of materials, compatibility of additions to the main structure and how well the project fits into the neighborhood context. As might be expected, this area involves subjective aesthetic standards that as yet not all participants agree to.

The Working Group warns that strong enforcement of regulations is necessary if the revisions are to succeed. At the moment, according to its report to the City Council, extensive construction is now going on in Oakland without permits that violates both existing and proposed standards. Even projects with permits frequently violate existing standards. Increased fees could cover the cost of hiring the additional staff necessary to enforce the new zoning standard.

While there is consensus among participants over general principles, they do differ over some details. For example, the Working Group urges adoption of building depth limits (front to back) for new construction while the Planning Commission is opposed. Whether neighbors should be routinely notified about upcoming projects is also in debate. The Working Group has requested that the City Council extend the December 12, 2000, deadline to March 27, 2001, to allow more time for public review and development of consensus.

On the RCPC November 16 General Meeting Agenda

Creative, Do-It-Together Play Structures Considered for The Greenbelt Park

by Eileen Fitzfaulkner and Theresa Nelson

As the final phase of the Greenbelt Park Master Plan nears completion, community residents will have an opportunity to decide whether to design and build their own play structures reflecting the unique quality of the Rockridge /Temescal neighborhoods — or simply pick one out of a catalogue.

Steve Costa, Chair of FROGS (Friends of the Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt) will make a presentation on community-built parks featuring the designs of Robert Leathers and Associates at the November 16 RCPC General Meeting, 7:30 p.m. in the Rockridge Library.

Leathers and Associates, an architectural firm located in upstate N.Y., is known nationwide for its ability to bring communities together to create unique, one-of-a-kind play environments. Its designers collaborate with volunteers from a community to design and build a custom-made structure of outstanding quality. The collaboration and volunteer effort is like an old-fashioned barn-raising and has the same empowering effect on participants from all communities. "A community built project builds community" is the founding principle of the firm, which has built more than 1600 community parks. *The Smithsonian Magazine* says: "Visually, the Leathers playgrounds are stunning, perhaps because they are constructed chiefly of a rare intangible--community spirit." A recent Leathers' project is the "Dreamland for kids" playground near the Bancroft entrance to Berkeley Aquatic Park.

For more information on the work of Robert Leathers, please visit their web site at: www.leathersassociates.com

Opposition to Claremont Expansion Intensifies as Neighborhoods Unite

Berkeley and Oakland Neighbors of the Claremont (BONC) builds wider coalition to protest traffic congestion and takeover of Chabot Golf Course

by Michael P. Smith, Chair, BONC Steering Committee

A recent *East Bay Express* article detailed efforts of KSL Recreation, a subsidiary of the leveraged buyout investment firm KKR, to privatize the Lake Chabot golf course and correctly linked the takeover of the public course to KSL's planned 165-room expansion of the Claremont Hotel. The article noted the protracted grassroots opposition by local golfers to the golf course acquisition. It further stated that the Claremont expansion plans "have drawn the ire and suspicion of the hotel's neighbors, and when the comfortable classes of the Berkeley and Oakland hills get their dander up there is usually hell to pay."

What this article failed to report is that because KSL's "destination resort" expansion plans are linked to wider issues affecting the citizens of Oakland and Berkeley — from traffic safety to access to public parking to the loss of public facilities like the golf course — immediate neighbors of the Claremont who banded together last spring as Berkeley and Oakland Neighbors of the Claremont (BONC), now seek to broaden the coalition on several fronts.

In mid-September, for instance, members of BONC's steering committee supported the Lake Chabot Golf Course Coalition by attending an Oakland Planning Commission meeting and speaking at its Open Forum. BONC steering committee member Wendy Markel called attention to the connection between the hotel expansion and golf course privatization and requested that public planning assessment of traffic impacts of the golf course development also consider increased traffic between the hotel and golf course and the impact of this increased flow on local and regional traffic patterns. BONC steering committee member Dan Lieberman pointed out that because membership of the hotel's pool and tennis club has expanded well beyond the 900 members allowed by its existing conditional use permit (currently 1,120 and growing), the Claremont Hotel is already adversely affecting available public parking in surrounding streets and affecting safety on Claremont Avenue because of cars parked on the winding shoulders of the Avenue from Stonewall Road to Alvarado Road. Much of this increased parking has been generated by employees of the Hotel and Resort, including the manager, who are no longer allowed to park within the Claremont complex, to accommodate the expansion of the club membership, and whose cars now take up all the empty public parking spaces on streets that do not have 2-hour parking restrictions. Additional parking congestion is generated by club members themselves who must now either use often inadequate valet parking spaces or add to the parking congestion on surrounding streets. The Oakland Planning Commission deemed both issues raised by BONC leaders as legitimate public concerns and has ordered appropriate traffic/parking studies.

BONC, whose e-mail membership list now exceeds 450 members from scores of neighborhoods in Oakland and Berkeley, is forging active connections with Neighborhood groups in Rockridge, Vicente Canyon, and other neighborhoods in Oakland and Berkeley concerned about traffic safety and other environmental impacts. Other BONC subcommittees have been organized to deal with the issues of (a) landmarking the Hotel and its environs as a possible legal brake on excessive development; (b) restoration of the creek which was buried by landfill to accommodate previous Hotel and Spa expansion plans, and (c) legal representation and fundraising.

Oakland and Berkeley citizens interested in becoming actively involved in BONC's grassroots efforts to resist the KSL development plans should contact the following members and supporters of the BONC steering committee at their respective e-mail addresses at left, below.

Contacting BONC

General Information about BONC and its grassroots activities:
Michael P. Smith (mpsmith@verio.com)
Elizabeth Kibbey (ekibbey@yahoo.com)

Traffic/Parking/Oakland City Planning Issues
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Community Advocacy and Alliances
Cindy Chandler (wplan@pacbell.net)
Michael P. Smith (mpsmith@verio.com)



Caltrans to Conduct 4th Bore Environmental Impact Study

by Ronnie Spitzer

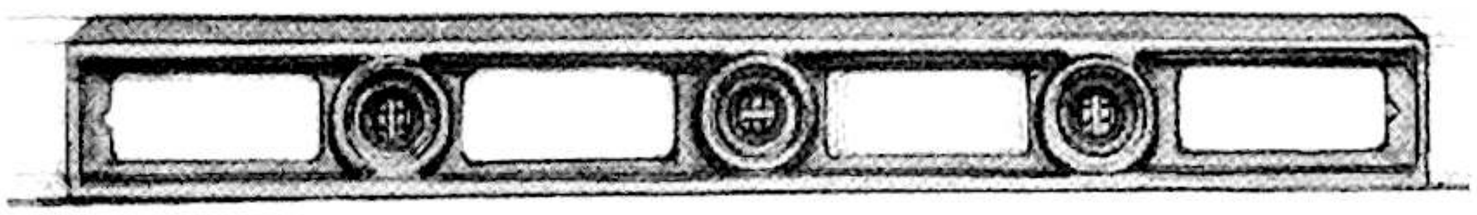
The California Transportation Commission (CTC) voted on Sept. 28 to release $15 million from its discretionary fund for an environmental analysis of a 4th bore for the Caldecott tunnel, to be conducted by Caltrans. Everyone interested in this project should send a letter to Caltrans requesting placement on the mailing list for updates and notices of meetings: Caltrans, 111 Grand Avenue, P.O. Box 23660, Oakland, CA 94623-0660. Phone 510/286-4444. The timing of the EIR decision is disturbing because the regional Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Corridor Study, intended to serve as a guide for the state Transportation Commission, is still unfinished. Not only is Caltrans going ahead with an environmental study without final recommendations from our local groups, Gov. Davis has appointed two members to the CTC who represent Contra Costa, but none from Alameda.

The Corridor Study is uncompleted because such deep divisions remain between Alameda County (opposed to a 4th bore) and Contra Costa County (supportive) that consensus recommendations in the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) are difficult. However, City Councilmember Jane Brunner has worked hard to address and resolve all the 4th bore issues raised pertaining to the Corridor Study.

Please attend meetings and send letters to our state representatives expressing your opinion of the CTC's decision to proceed with an EIR for a 4th bore. RCPC is preparing its own letter and will continue its involvement in the Corridor Study and EIR process.

The Route 24/Caldecott Tunnel Corridor Study Policy Advisory Committee holds its next public meeting on Friday, November 17, 9:30 a.m. at the Alameda County CMA Board Room, 1333 Broadway, Suite 220, Oakland, CA.Contact project manager Doug Kimsey at 464-7794 or dkimsey@mtc.ca.gov

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If you are not getting *The News* at your home, it may be because your block captain has moved or retired from delivery service with a full pension. We have also added new blocks to our circulation route (see #6K, 6L, 6M below) and have not located block captains for them. 150 volunteers have delivered the news since 1986; occasionally they get tired and need some help. The blocks listed below need block captains. If you would like to pitch in, or if you wish to report a block that is not being served, please call 547-3855. If you are calling to volunteer, mention the route number. In either case, please leave your name and telephone number.

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#16A: 5200 block of Miles Avenue

#09H: up Keith from MacMillan to 5925 Broadway

#6H: 6000 block of Margarido

#6I: 5900 block of Margarido

#6J: 5800 block of Margarido

#6K: Golden Gate Avenue from Broadway to Eustice Avenue

#6L: Eustice Avenue and Brookside Avenue from Eustice to Ocean View Drive

#6M: Brookside Avenue from Broadway to Eustice Avenue.



Rockridge Park Update

Neighbors Fine Tune Plans for the Greenbelt Park Accessories

by Theresa Nelson,
Rockridge Park Committee

On October 5, a group of nine neighbors met at the Clifton Corridor site to review possible locations for park play structures.

After walking the length of the corridor with Parks and Recreation Department staff Kerry-Jo Ricketts-Ferris and Jennifer Koney-Li, the group made two consensus recommendations: 1) that the large central area of the corridor, which is closest to homes and apartment balconies, be developed as mostly passive open space, with some seating, and perhaps some amenities like the butterfly garden, animal art sculptures, or a small tracker ride or Galaxy-style twister; 2) that the larger play structure be located in the upper corridor area closer to Hardy Park, near the pump station, and shielded by the large redwoods and oak nearby. The play structure would be built on the large flat area, and the creek path would be located near the pump station and along the original creek path through the central area of the park.

Questions raised included covering the pump station, moving the pump access hole, locating the water play area nearer to the redwoods, and removing the large eucalyptus leaning precariously over the site. Parks Department staff will respond to these queries at the next Master Plan meeting, which City Councilmember Jane Brunner will announce via postcard. Call 238-7001 to get on the mailing list.

Help Build Our Park

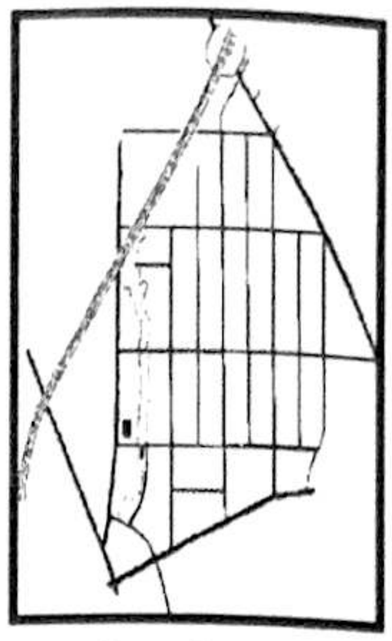
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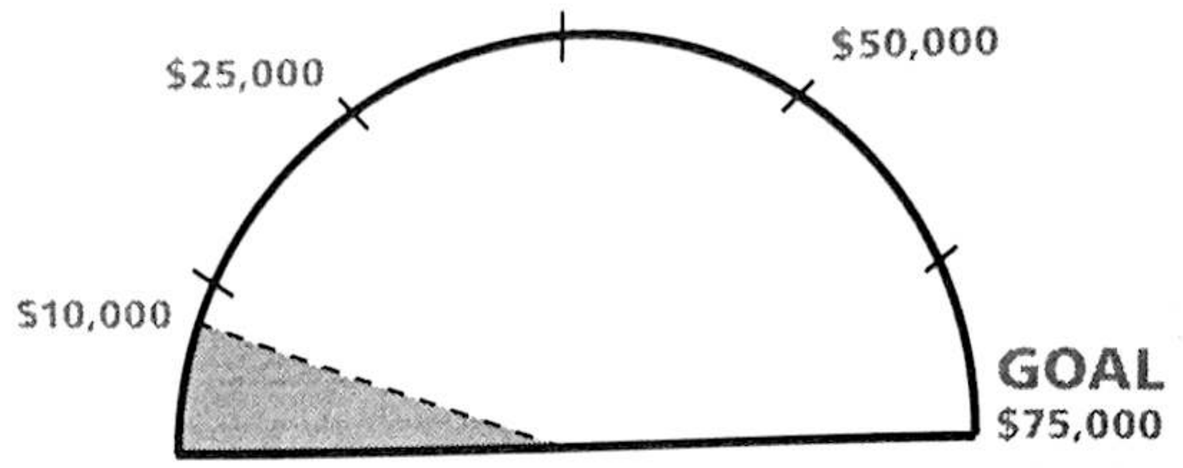


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Superintendent Dennis Chaconas Addresses RCPC Meeting

New Oakland Schools chief lays out his life story and his prescription for Oakland Schools

Saying he needed to "liven the joint up," Oakland Schools Superintendent Dennis Chaconas began his address to the RCPC October meeting with an amusing story from his childhood. It seems that the first few times his mother dropped him off at school, she would arrive home only to find him sitting on the front steps again.

Born and raised in Oakland, Chaconas said he went on to become a "nightmare" of a student. Eventually, he met two teachers who encouraged and inspired him to go to college, fighting against other teachers' attempts to "dumb him down" and even paying for him to take the college entrance exam.

Chaconas frequently referred to these teachers, and how they took responsibility for him, in order to drive home his message: teachers should take "ownership" of their students, rather than finding "excuses for them not to learn." It was an idea that seemed to resonate with the meeting attendees, many of whom are parents, teachers, and school administrators.

Chaconas related his experience at



PHOTO: CY GULASSA

Oakland Schools Superintendent Dennis Chaconas, pictured during his talk at a recent RCPC meeting.

Oakland Tech, where he served as principal for six years. "We raised standards, treated teachers like professionals, and" — repeating his phrase of the evening — "took ownership of the kids." He described "flattening out the organization" in his subsequent position as Superintendent of Schools in Alameda, where, he claimed with evident pride, he personally supervised and ruled on the tenure of every teacher. He cited figures showing significant academic improvement in that district since his time there.

Since his return to the Oakland school system, Chaconas has found that communication, accountability and ownership are lacking.

With regard to accountability, he mentioned ironically the recent "pleasure" of reading 1500 teacher evaluations, all of which were positive except one. To laughter from the audience, he proclaimed, "I've never seen so many great teachers in my life."

He lamented a pervasive "lack of ownership of the system" that breeds "complainers instead of fixers," recalling countless meetings on the schools where everyone present blamed problems on "downtown" or "the superintendent" or "the Board." Without ownership, he said, there can be no sense of responsibility for improvement.

Finally, he said, there's the "issue of results." Test scores, he asserted, prove that the focus has not been on the bottom line. He is pursuing specific goals articulated by the Board and has already cut the layers of administration between himself and school principals and significantly raised teachers' salaries (see box at left).

Answering a question about how "politics" would affect his ability to run the schools, Chaconas said, "Once I start worrying about the politics of adults and not kids, I'm done anyway. I'm gonna work with (Mayor) Jerry (Brown), and I'm gonna work with the Board. I'm a fighter, and I'm fighting for the 54,000 kids in Oakland."

Chaconas' Accomplishments Since Arriving in Oakland:

- Moved 300 top-rated teachers from downtown offices back into classrooms;
- Cut bureaucratic layers between superintendent and principals from 5 to1;
- Implemented "Open-Court" phonics-based reading program in many under-performing schools (with plans to establish a uniform reading program);
- Fired or re-assigned 39 principals and vice-principals;
- Raised starting teachers' salaries from $26,000 to $37,000.

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Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

East Meets West on College Avenue

by Barry Kaufman

A reporter once asked Woody Allan why he rarely left New York City. Woody replied: "It's comforting to know that I can get a bowl of roast pork chow mein at 3:00 in the morning." While living in NY, I would often make a 2am run into Chinatown for a bowl of steaming wor won ton soup and roast pork chow mein. When I left NY, I went through a Chinese food withdrawal. To satisfy my cravings, I bought a wok, stocked up on basic Asian cooking ingredients and began my cooking career trying to reproduce the classic Cantonese dishes I loved so much.

When I arrived in the San Francisco Bay Area, my gastronomic love for Chinese food was expanded to include the cuisines of Japan and Southeast Asia. I love walking around and shopping in the Asian markets of San Francisco and Oakland.

In our own neighborhood, Yasai Market carries a fairly extensive array of basic Asian ingredients, but the largest pan-Asian supermarket in the Bay-area is Ranch 99 in Albany. For the serious Asian food cook, I highly recommend *The Asian Grocery Store Demystified* by Linda Bladholm (Renaissance Books) and the website www.asiafood.com.

Starting with Japanese restaurants, Rockridge has three outstanding and highly regarded choices: Uzen, Tachibana, and Isobune. Uzen is a classic "cozy" country-style Japanese restaurant. Although Uzen offers a standard menu of sushi, it is their steamy udon noodle soups that warm the soul. A large bowl is easily a meal for two. Although somewhat pricey, Tachibana offers diners one of the finest Japanese grills in the Bay Area. I can never resist Tachibana's spider rolls. Isobune, Japanese for boat, is always a favorite and lots of fun for families. Sushi is selected from little boats that float around the oval counter. For value, you cannot beat Isobune's bento box lunch special at $8.50.

For Chinese restaurants, Rockridge offers Eve's Hunan, King Shang, and the Great Wall. Eve's Hunan is beautifully appointed and offers a menu that specializes in Hunan and Szechuan cuisine. Hunan and Szechuan cooking features meat dishes, particularly pork and lamb, seasoned with spicy hot peppers. If you can't make up your mind, there is King Shang which advertises itself as specializing in Mandarin, Szechuan, and Hunan cuisine. The menu here is ambitious, similar to specializing in New England, New Orleans, and California cuisine. The Great Wall is a vegetarian and seafood restaurant. The menu offers very unique dishes including their famous sweet and sour walnuts.

Rockridge Southeast Asian restaurants include Pearl of Siam and Nan Yang. Pearl of Siam offers a standard menu of Thai dishes that includes a tasty tam yum soup, green curry chicken, and pad thai noodles. Under the direction of owner Philip Chu, Nan Yang prepares some of the best Burmese food in the Bay-Area. Burmese cuisine combines the best of Indian curries, Chinese spices, and Southeast Asian flavors and Philip is always experimenting with new flavor combinations.

The following recipe is one that I have been preparing for many years. It is very simple and combines the best of pan Asian cooking.

Chicken Lemongrass Soup With Rice, Lime Juice, Basil and Cilanto

1-2 stalks of lemongrass (available at Yasai Market)

5 cups chicken broth (canned is fine)

¾ # boneless, skinless chicken thighs cut in 1.5 inch dice

1 teaspoon sugar

1 cup of cooked rice

3-4 tablespoons of fresh lime juice (two limes)

salt to taste

½ cup chopped cilantro

½ cup chopped basil

Use only the whitish bulb end of the lemongrass stalk and cut into 1 inch pieces. Discard the tough green end. Combine chicken broth, chicken, lemongrass and sugar. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes or until chicken is tender. Add lime juice, cooked rice, cilantro and basil. Season with salt.

Barry Kaufman is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy. His e-mail is kaufman@sirius.com. *Barry is available for private cooking classes.*

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UPDATE: TEMESCAL GATEWAY PROJECT

Temescal Plans to ask City to Acquire Pussycat Theater Site

Neighborhood groups seeks coordinated development of the vacant theatre lot and a parking lot

by Jeff Norman

At the recent Gateway community meeting, Temescal and Rockridge neighbors ratified the widely circulated "community values statement" pertaining to future development of the former Pussycat Theater site at 51st and Telegraph. Among other recommendations, the statement calls for a coordinated development of both the vacant lot and the adjacent Children's Hospital-owned parking lot on 51st Street.

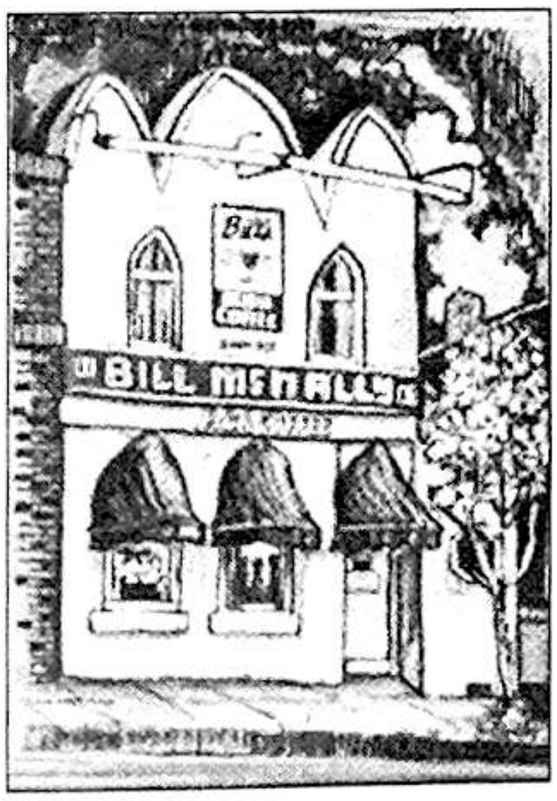
With this in mind, members of the Temescal Neighbors Together(TNT) Gateway Committee met September 28 with representatives from Children's Hospital Oakland (CHO) to discuss its long-range plans for the parking lot. For some years, a portion of the lot has been used for CHO staff parking while the rest has been leased to an Auto Row dealership for car storage. At this meeting, it was confirmed that CHO recently has agreed to lease most of the property to the Oakland Fire Department which intends to build a temporary fire station on the site while it replaces its aging facility across the street. In the meantime, CHO is undertaking a study to assess its long-term needs vis-a-vis its various properties, including the 51st Street parking lot. TNT has requested to be included in CHO's assessment process as it pertains to the 51st Street property.

TNT has learned from SDH Properties, the southern California-based company that acquired the former Pussycat theater site last May, that SDH not only has no plans for the vacant lot, but a substantial lien placed on the property by the city has significantly reduced the property's value. At a community meeting, a proposal was made for TNT to meet with Councilmember Jane Brunner to explore the city's acquiring the property for open space, with the goal of revisiting a design for the combined properties once the Fire Department vacates its temporary location on CHO's lot. Uses suggested for this open space have included a landscaped park, community garden, commemoration of Temescal Creek and a site for the Temescal farmers market.

The Oakland Fire Department (OFD) has announced plans to temporarily relocate Station No. 8 to the parking lot on 51st Street across from its current facility while it replaces the existing fire house with a new structure. Members of the TNT Gateway committee, meeting in September with Fire Chief Gerald Simon, Assistant Fire Chief Ron Carter, Councilmember Jane Brunner, and her staff, learned that OFD plans to erect a temporary "Butler"-type building to house the engines, and modular buildings to house the crew during the estimated three years it will take to replace the current firehouse. OFD already has budgeted for most of the $650,000 required for the temporary structures and will request $3 million from the upcoming two-year city budget for the new, asbestos-free, seismically upgraded, larger facility. Construction of the temporary fire house is expected to begin in the next couple of months.

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The Neighborhood Merchant

BY THERESA NELSON



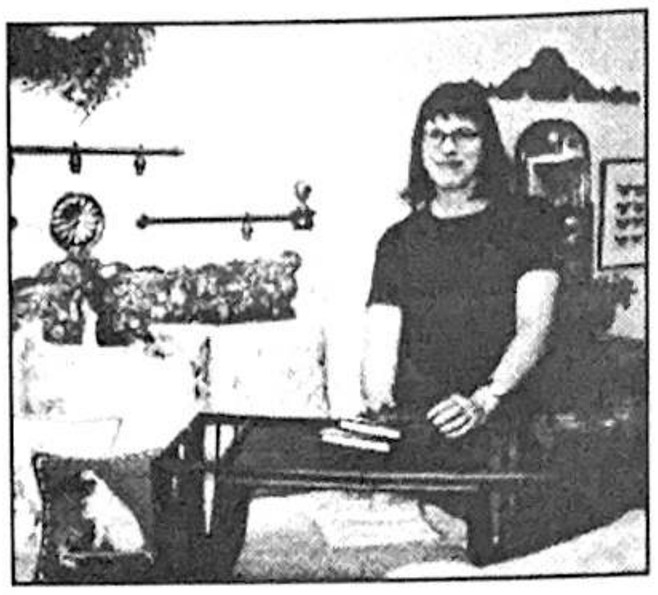
PHOTO: CHRIS AHLSTRAND

ILDI & CO., An Elegant New Location
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To passers-by, the front window of ILDI & CO. is a snapshot of a classic Parisian café. Authentic woven chairs and a zinc-top table display champagne in a silver wine cooler accompanied by a fresh baguette and tiny truffles, which turn out to be in the shape of little dogs. The cast iron pigeons pecking at the bread crumbs scattered under the chairs look so real you expect them to fly away as you approach. Welcome to ILDI & CO., which recently hosted a grand re-opening in a new, larger space at College and Chabot Road.

The new store transfers the special feel of the cozy former shop to a spacious, light-filled location that has room for even more of ILDI's unique home and personal gift items. Rockridge resident and store owner Melissa O'Connor, a stylish woman with dark hair and a warm smile, told me how she aims to create a joyful and memorable shopping experience. "I think of it as the 'wow' factor," she says, "bringing together beautiful merchandise, well-designed displays, unusual lighting and great music, so that you want to take home the feeling you have in the store, like a postcard from a favorite place." On the busy grand re-opening weekend, frequent gasps of delight were followed by *oohs* and *aahs* as patrons discussed this pair of drop pearl earrings or that set of pink-silk pajamas festooned with Eiffel Towers and French poodles.

This vision became a reality after Melissa's experience working in design and retail, combined with the involvement of friends and family. Her husband, a construction manager and architect, designed the front desk and counter to her specifications, allowing ample space for one of the store's trademarks, exquisite wrapping jobs by Melissa and her staff. A friend who shares her design aesthetics created the logo and signage for the store. Melissa said, "Life is short and we only get so many chances to do things that we dream of. Creating this store is what I really wanted to do, and it was time to take the risk." Degrees in merchandising and management from the Fashion Institute of San Francisco sharpened her aesthetic sense, already well-developed from her father's party store in San Jose. She credits him with teaching her the best way to tie a ribbon and wrap a gift.



Ildi & Co. founder and owner Melissa O'Connor amidst some of her elegant collection of wares.

It seems that almost every surface at ILDI & CO. displays something *très belle*. Bright silk bags and slippers nestle next to soft wool hats and bright shawls with Kashmir-style embroidery. Fragrant, French-milled soaps of a hen and her eggs keep an eye on a tiny brass travel clock in a smart, red-leather case. Entire display areas are given over to dog and cat art items, and antique, glass bookcases are filled with delicate, tasteful jewelry. A glowing harvest table sports Chinese autumn-print placemats, vintage brass napkin rings, rust and green dripless French candles, and a tall bowl filed with alluring plush fruit. Photo frames made of vintage postcards join old-fashioned fountain pens and a Parisian desk clock on a fine, leather-topped desk, next to the "French Phrase A Day" 2001 calendar.

The name ILDI & CO. comes from Melissa's late mother Ildico. Hungarian, she grew up in Paris, moved to San Salvador and reached Hollywood in her teens. The store is a tribute to Melissa's mother, whose stories of France in the 1920s painted a magical picture for her daughter which are now embodied in the design and French flair of the store. As you look for the perfect gift for the holidays or a birthday, or for a special treat for yourself, a visit to the charming ILDI & CO. may uncover exactly the treasure you're searching for.

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Congratulations Theresa Nelson!

Theresa won dinner for two at Filippo's Pastaria for correctly answering last month's trivia question.

ANSWER: The earliest known recording of the name "Rockridge" on a map, designating the area north of Broadway where wealthy residents built estates among outcrops of sandstones and lava flows, was in 1878. The term "Rockridge" is said to have commemorated the Livermore family's favorite large rock where they picnicked, today near Glenbrook and Bowling Drives (bayarea.citysearch.com Rockridge Neighborhood History). Thank you to all who entered. If you have a Rockridge Trivia idea, call me & receive a gift.

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Autumn Leaves



Like autumn leaves swirling about in our neighborhood, cultural activities are everywhere in and around Rockridge in November. The list of creative endeavors is long and varied. Something there for everyone. You can participate, spectate, ruminate and cogitate. Or you can just pull out your checkbook in support. But one thing is for sure, you won't have to go far from home to be right in the midst of it all. Here are a few delectable morsels.

Theatre Oakland playwright Judith Offer has written three one-act plays which will be performed at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church. The performance, serendipitously named "Three By Three" will be presented on three consecutive November Sunday afternoons (November 5, 12, 19) at 3 p.m. Ms. Offer is familiar to many as the librettist for the musical "A Shirtwaist Tale," performed at the College Preparatory School last fall. Her one-act plays have been performed in New York, Connecticut, San Francisco and Walnut Creek. This time, the playwright has focused on all of us in Oakland, young, old and diverse. Her lighthearted comedies and sketches are set in a Rockridge home for sale, in the old Capwell's in Downtown Oakland, and at a Fastprint on Lakeshore Avenue. Here's our chance to come and see ourselves as others see us, and perhaps laugh a little at ourselves. Call 444-8521 now for reservations to this delightful event.

And there is another play opening just off Broadway. At Brookside, that is. College Preparatory School plans to present a student production, "Noises Off," by Michael Frayn, described as "a hilarious English farce with 8 doors and 5 plates of sardines." That will be December 8 and 9 at the Buttner Auditorium on the CPS campus. For tickets call 652-0111.

Music

The Florio Street House Concerts have begun again. The series opens Sunday, November 19, at 3 p.m. with The Mark Levine Jazz Trio. Tea and crumpets will be served. Call Katherine Westine at 601-9631 for more information. I am told by BAHA that house concerts were a much-cherished tradition in this area. In fact BAHA (841-2242) is sponsoring a concert on Sunday, November 5, in a lovely old Berkeley home to complement their fall lecture series, "From Morgan to Modern."

College Preparatory School's fall concert is shaping up for performances November 17-18. Tina Harrington of the music department was most enthusiastic about the fine renditions of Renaissance and modern music planned by the school's jazz group, orchestra, chorus and vocal ensemble. They will again be joined by the "guest chorus" made up of friends, alumni, parents of CPSers and you, their Rockridge neighbors. Yes, you are welcome if you can make a few rehearsals. They are particularly short of — what else? — tenors! If you can hit that high note, please give them a call at 652-0111.

Books

Diesel Books has a wonderful line-up for book lovers. There will be a party Sunday, November 5, 2 p.m. to celebrate the release of *syllogism 5*, published by Manifest Press. Several of the contributors to the journal will be on hand for the readings. It promises to be a lively event, so don't miss it. Also, Meredith Moran will be at Diesel on Wednesday, November 29, 7:30 p.m. to lead a discussion on contemporary education. Ms. Moran is the author of Bay Area Best Seller, *Class Dismissed: A Year in the Life of an American High School*. The study was done at Berkeley High School, really close to home. There is too much to list here, so please call Diesel at 653-9965 for a complete list of events. Thank you.

Art

We're looking forward to seeing many Rockridge artists opening their studios again for the Holiday Open Studios 2000! This will be on the weekend of December 9-10, from 12 to 5 p.m. Examples of the artists' work will be on view at the Rockridge Library beginning mid-November. Maps and other information will also be available there. If the weather is nice, do plan a walking tour. You are likely to spot even more open studio signs on the sidewalks. Artists have a way of doing that. Participating artists so far are:

Karen LeGault (Dec. 1,2,3 only), Watercolors; Carol Aust, Painting; Lisa Dahms, Prints; Linda Lemon, Mixed Media, Note Cards; Liz Maxwell, Painting; Martha Palos, Sculpture, Mosaics; Amy Rosenfeld, Painted Wood Furniture; Maura Singer, Prayer Fountains; Joanne Yeaton, Paintings, Handmade Books; Nora Barrows-Friedman, Photographs, Note Cards; Greg McKay, Paintings; Tudy Wehrman, Ceramics and Jewelry; Lydia Gans, Photography and World Craft Collection; Caroline Stern, Murals, Faux Finishes.

Rockridge Photo Essay 2000 Update

If you are interested in joining us in putting together a photographic quilt of Rockridge as we are today, please contact me at 652-6664, or e-mail me at oniesar@aol.com. We are looking at proposals January 25-31,2001. All are welcome!

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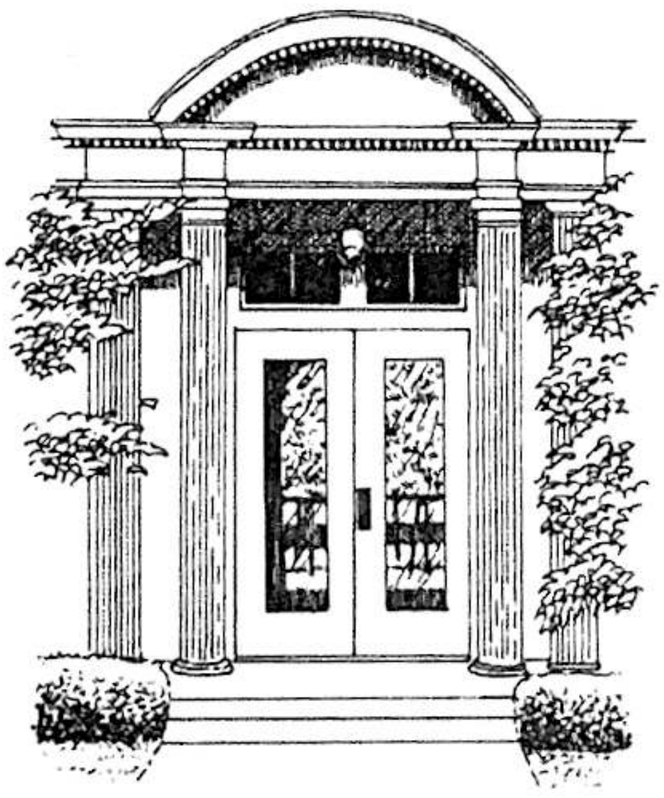
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5856 College Avenue, #130, OAKLAND 94618 or call 814-6060.
Deadline is next to the last thursday of the month.

ROCKRIDGE BRANCH LIBRARY,

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017 Rockridge Branch Library Storytimes for NOVEMBER, 2000:

PRE-SCHOOL STORY HOURS: ..... Tue 11/7: 10:30 & 11:00am; Tue 11/21: 10:30 & 11:00am
TODDLER STORY TIME: ..... SAT 11/4: 10:30AM
PAJAMA STORY TIME: ..... WED 11/8: 7:00PM

Library will be closed Saturday, Nov. 11 (Veteran's Day) and Thursday, Nov. 23 (Thanksgiving).

Lawyers in the Library Free advice 6-8 pm, first Thursday each month. Signup starts at 5 pm.

College Avenue Presbyterian Church and RAMPA Co-host Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

On Thursday, November 3, families across the nation will be commemorating the first cooperative harvest celebration of the American settlers and the ancient inhabitants of this land. Here in Rockridge those without families or without resources are invited to share a Thanksgiving meal at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church at 5951 College Avenue from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The menu will feature turkey, yams, cranberry salad, vegetables, bread and dessert. The Rockridge Area Merchants and Professional Association and the Church are sponsoring this event and need volunteers to set up, cook, serve and clean up. Food and clothing donations for the Give-Away section are also welcome. Money donations will help to defray costs.

If you would like to volunteer, call Pastor Bill Beatty at 547-3053 or Ginni Palmer at 658-0604. Checks can be mailed to: THANKSGIVING MEAL, 5951 College Avenue, Oakland, CA 94618.



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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.

Shots Fired

A resident reports hearing an exchange of gunfire in the vicinity of Clifton and College Ave on Friday, Oct. 13 between 10:30 and 11 p.m. The shots were thought to have been fired between two groups of youths, one in a car and the other on foot. No further details are available at this time.

The Hotline

The Rockridge Community Planning Council's Crime Alert Hotline is a volunteer effort sponsored and funded by your donations to RCPC. Community members can leave messages about criminal activity by voicemail at 814-2255, or by e-mail at: rcpc_crime_hotline@yahoo.com. Weekly updates can be heard at the same phone number, and are sent to this list on a trial basis. Include the date, time and location of the incident that you are reporting, as well as your name and telephone number. All identifying information is kept confidential. Thank you.

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ROCKRIDGE CRIME ALERT HOTLINE

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Letter to The Editor

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

Flower Thieves Cut and Run

Editor

The hydrangea thieves are back again, this time on Harwood. They cut more than they could take so they just left a bunch of cut flowers to die.

A curse upon these thieves and a double curse on the flower sellers who buy from them, especially the seller who was asked not to but continues anyway.

Liz Waterman



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Gay Ducey

from page 2

barreled out. He looked just like the cartoon Tasmanian Devil, a roiling, snapping ball of mayhem. He made straight for the pack of wailing kids, leapt into space and came down right on Delilah as the grownups waded in with sticks and feet. We never landed a blow. Delilah squatted, growled a warning, and then bit Sammy on the ear. "BAD DOG," she said, in an impressive understatement.

Afterward, Sammy the Spider Dog did not change either his venom or his venue, but there was a limited spiritual readjustment. The kids never did walk up to the porch; they waited for Delilah to do so, and when she did, they could hear Sammy whimpering and snapping behind the door, backing up all the while.

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Even the Rain Could Not Scare

A thousand thanks to College Avenue merchants, especially Diesel Bookstore, Rockridge Kids, the Rockridge Library, and hundreds of parents and children who enjoyed the 9th Annual Rockridge Children's Halloween Parade. Although the weather did not cooperate with us this year, it didn't dampen spirits as more than a hundred kids and their parents crowded into Diesel Bookstore to sit around the fireplace and listen to stories. A very special thanks to storyteller Jenny Makofsky, and to authors Robert San souci and Judy sierra who read from their books, including *Cinderella skeleton* and *Antarctic Antics.*

This year's parade had adorable and fabulous costumes aplenty, creating many oohs and aahs among merchants and parents alike. Most enjoyable were the wonderful treats generously donated by College Avenue merchants.

An event like this requires the help of many volunteers to make it a fun experience for all. Special thanks to the Rockridge Kids children's store for providing the balloons. Thanks also to volunteers for blowing up hundreds of balloons and helping handle traffic during the parade: Holy Names High School and Boy Scout Troop (274).

Our most heartfelt thanks to our wonderful College Avenue merchants who welcomed the children in spite of the rain and helped make this a happy and fun day for all:

(East side of College Avenue): Nan Yang, Super Cuts, Murasaki Futon Shop, Ag Photo Digital, Hank & Frank Bicycles, Bosko's Framing Gallery, TranSports, Sierra Club Bookstore, Birkenstock, Baby World, Zip Mama's, Barclay's Restaurant,ILDI & Company, Cotton & Company Shop, Capezio Dance-Theatre Shop, The Great Frame-Up, Rockridge Luggage, Garden Cleaners, Las Palmas, Moderne Eye, Great Harvest Bread, Oakland Kosher Foods, Lillian's Children's Resale, Crossroads Trading, Red Tractor Cafe, Ben & Nick's Bar & Grill, Crepevine, Pendragon Books, Cotton Basics, Itsy Bitsy, Rockridge Beauty Supply, Pasta Pomodoro, Rockridge Cafe, Saturn Records, Madame Butterfly, Cafe Rustica, Filippo's Pastaria;(West side of College Avenue) Shell, Agatha Rainford, Warm Things, Talisman Antiques, In Full Swing, Paperia, Katrina Rozelle, Dreyer's, Barney's Gourmet Hamburgers, Zachary's Chicago Pizza, Rockridge Rags, Jucy's, Market Hall Produce, Rockridge Fish Market, Enzo's Meat & Poultry, Paul Marcus Wines, Bloomie's, Oliveto Restaurant and Cafe, The Pasta Shop, Grace



Author Judy Sierra reads *The House that Drac Built* to undampened Halloween spirits who took refuge in Diesel Bookstore on a rainy October 28. *The Fiend of Bloodygore*, illustrated above in wicked detail, is widely suspected of summoning rain for the annual parade.

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Halloween Away from College Avenue



Photos: Cy Gulassa

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The parade was sponsored by the RCPC subcommittee PARKS, People Advocating for Rockridge KidS, a working committee to develop a children's park in Rockridge.

For more information about PARKS, please call Theresa Nelson at 420-0539.

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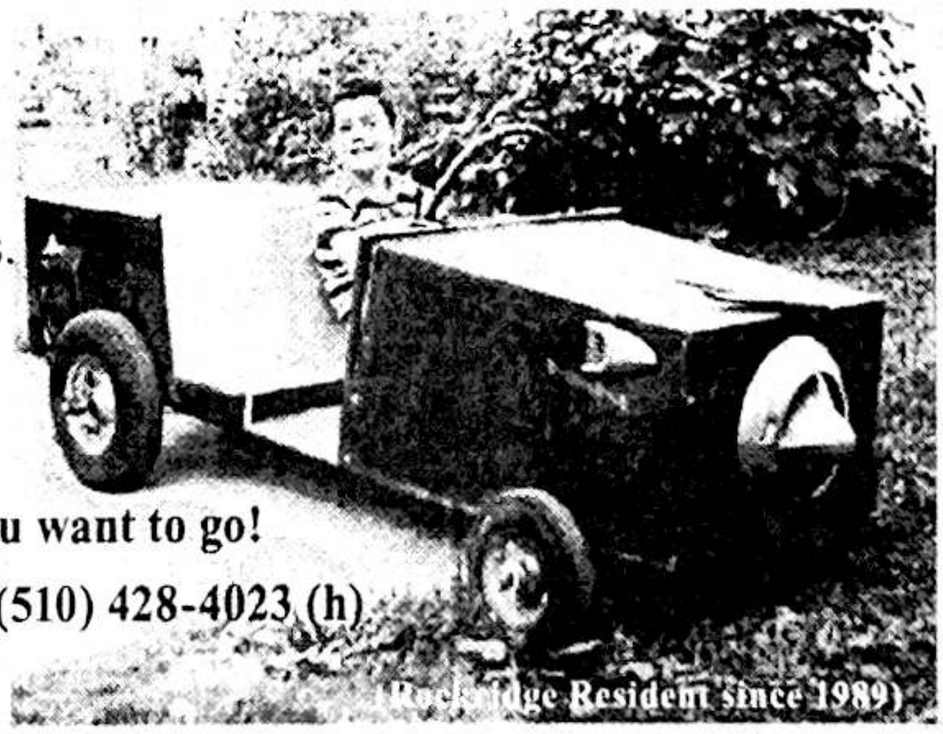
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