THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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Sponsored by The Rockridge Community Planning Council • 5245 College Ave. PMB 311 • Oakland, CA 94618

agenda: RCPC General Meeting

Thursday, February 20, 7:00 p.m.

NOTE: Regular location, early start time!

Rockridge Branch Library Community Room 5366 College Avenue (at Manila)

■ **Rockridge Public Schools Meeting**

Find out which school won RCPC's first Community Service Grant! Kerry Hamill, Rockridge's School Board representative, will open discussion about how the Oakland Unified School District plans to face budget deficits (see accompanying article). All public schools in Rockridge will join in a panel, offering descriptions of their school communities.

At the January RCPC General Meeting: Caldecott Tunnel Plans

RCPC Says No to a Westbound Bore, Asks for Broader Study



by Jacqueline Tasch

After listening to views from Rockridge residents at its General Meeting on January 23, the Rockridge Community Planning Council has sent a letter to Caltrans, opposing any plan to create a new westbound bore in the Caldecott Tunnel. The letter also urges Caltrans to broaden the scope of its environmental impact study and to make plans to mitigate negative impacts on Rockridge and other neighborhoods in the Highway 24 Corridor.

"We're strongly opposed to the current plan for a westbound bore," said RCPC's Traffic Chair, Michael Whitfield, who led the meeting. "The plan lacks a serious look at negative local impacts and what remediation steps would be needed to offset increased sound and traffic problems."

The present plan, which can be viewed online at

SEE "CALDECOTT," PAGE 5

Hamill Sees Progress for Schools Despite Budget Woes



Kerry Hamill, District 1 School Board Member. PHOTO: SUSAN MONTAUK

by Susan T. Montauk

First, the good news: "Over the last three years, the superintendent has hired a fleet of wonderful principals who are the most important people in the organization. He has initiated a whole number of reforms, many of which paid great dividends for kids," District 1 School Board member Kerry Hamill said in a recent interview with *The Rockridge News.* Hamill will speak at the General Meeting of the Rockridge Community Planning Council on February 20.

"Our classroom teachers have been getting better and better at their jobs, and that's what parents care about first and foremost," Hamill says. "I think most parents care about the classroom more than they care about the budget."

Which brings us to the bad news. Last summer, when the Oakland Unified School District went looking for an anticipated $40 million in income from revenue bonds to pay its bills, only $19 million was on hand. Superintendent Dennis Chaconas called Hamill, who was then President of the School Board, and said, with some understatement, that the district "had a big problem."

The problem was the projections used to create a budget were incorrect.

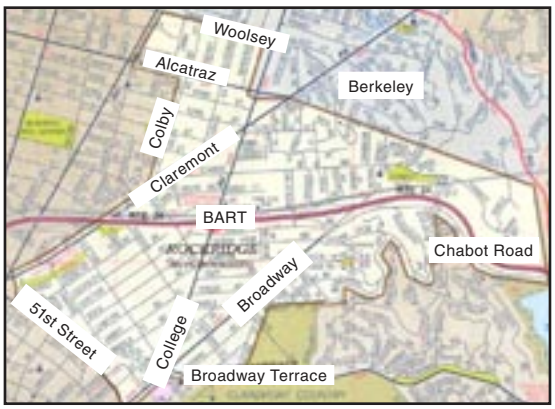
SEE "HAMILL," PAGE 4

RCPC Seeks Candidates For April Board Election

Do you have kids in Rockridge schools? Are you concerned about traffic in the neighborhood? Do zoning issues interest you? Or are you just excited about Rockridge and willing to contribute time to help sustain our wonderful environment? If so, the perfect volunteer opportunity is here. The Rockridge Community Planning Council holds its annual election at the April 17 General Meeting at the Rockridge Library. Rockridge residents, at least 18 years of age and residing within RCPC boundaries (see map below), are encouraged to run for the five open positions on the 11-member board.

Candidates are invited to submit a statement of about 125 words (and a photo) describing their interest in running for the board. Statements must be

SEE "BOARD ELECTION," PAGE 11



Around the Neighborhood



by Jacqueline Tasch, Editor, **The Rockridge News**

Counting on Everyone

I owe an apology to the 1,384 or so Rockridge residents of Asian heritage. In my column last month, I neglected to include them in some remarks about Rockridge's demographics. It turns out that the percentage of Asians in Rockridge is slightly lower than the percentage in California—9% compared to nearly 11%—but Rockridge has much larger percentages of Chinese (4.2 compared to 2%) and Japanese (1.4 compared to .9%) residents than the state as a whole.

I'm not sure I can tell you why I overlooked Rockridge's Asians when I pointed out that Rockridge is 79.7% white, 5% African American, and 5% Hispanic. It would be easy—and true—to say I was focusing on gender and age and meant no offense. It would also be true to say that I left others out, as well: Rockridge is 3% Native American, .1% Pacific Islander, and 5.5% other or mixed races.

On the other hand, whatever I intended, people were hurt and angry. I'm responsible for that, and I'm sorry. I thank the readers who called this to my attention.

Going Public in Black and White

In the past, I've joked that the only jobs I haven't done at a newspaper were selling ads and driving the delivery truck. But I never wrote a column either, and only once or twice used the word *I* in a story referring to myself. It's been an interesting experience.

I've been surprised that people read what I have to say and even more surprised that they take the time to tell me what they think about it—both complaints and congratulations. In addition, I seem to have achieved a small measure of celebrity: I've been recognized more than once when I was going about my personal business, my *Rockridge News* hat left at home.

The first to link the real me and *The Rockridge News* editor was John Gelinas, pharmacist-owner of Chimes Pharmacy, who had a few words to say about the first column when I picked up a prescription some weeks ago. Of course, he had the advantage of knowing my name (from the prescription) and having only to match it to the name on the column.

Last week, while I was waiting to buy sausage at Ver Brugge's, a woman reader who lives on Ivanhoe squeezed my arm and said, "I just saw you in *The Rockridge News*." (She liked the demographic column in which I noted that middle-aged women may be taking over Rockridge.)

Worth a Thousand Words?

In December, members of *The Rockridge News* staff persuaded me to attach a photo to my column, and at least one person has seen the likeness. This is a matter of some dismay to me. I like to think that I don't take a good picture, and my friends have been kind enough to assure me that I'm much better looking in person. Now the truth is out.

The last time my photograph appeared in print, I was a cub reporter at the Buffalo Evening News, writing a feature about what it's like to ride an elephant in a circus parade (everyone looks at you admiringly, but wear gloves — elephant hide is like steel wool). If we could just delete the elephant — surely some computer program could manage that — I would prefer to use that photo with the column.

But then, I'm afraid, no one would ever recognize me, and it's nice to hear from you — e-mail, snail mail, or up front and personal.

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SEE COMMUNITY CALENDAR, PAGE 15, 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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- Would you like to volunteer to be a *Rockridge News* block captain?

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Neighborhood Celebrates Fire Station 8 Opening

"Within specs, ahead of time, and under budget": A "green" building for Oakland

by Claire Isaacs

Father Jay Mathews intoned the Firefighter's prayer. Architect Alan Kawasaki bragged that 65% of construction debris from the demolished 50-year-old Fire Station 8 was used to build its replacement. The firefighting staff presented District One Councilmember Jane Brunner with a piece of the old station's brass pole. Ninety-year-old John Muzio mused about his days as Lieutenant at Fire Station 8. A baby crawled on artist Jeff Norman's new History Walk. And the kids devoured the treats.

It was Friday, January 24, and the official Opening Day for Fire Station 8 at 463-51st Street was blessed with perfect weather. Two huge trucks framed the scene, one flying an American flag from its extended ladder. Surrounding the spanking new station were at least 200 people, from Fire Department vets, artists, and neighborhood sages, to the "under four-footers," as Fire Chief Gerald A. Simon fondly called the kids squatting on the pavement.

A highlight of the day was unveiling of a public art work by Temescal artist Jeff Norman, made of tiles and photographs describing Temescal's history and present.

Norman said that the work brought him closer to the people in the neighborhood and to the crew of Station 8, who, "with all their hospitality, helped me to enter a world I knew nothing about." He acknowledged present, former and retired station personnel, thanking them for "the stories you told, the photos you handed around, the meals you shared, and the T-shirt you wouldn't let me pay for."



Official ribbon cutting at Station 8 dedication: (l. to r.): Council Member Henry Chang, Jr., Fire Chief Gerald Simon, DPW Director Claudette Ford, Jane Brunner, City Manager Robert Bobb.

PHOTO : CLAIRE ISAACS

Fire Station 8 is double the size of the former facility and cost $4,284,000. It is a model of unique fast-tracking, "the fastest-built fire station in Oakland history," Project Manager Rob Lim said. The community had fought to get this station reopened as quickly as possible, so as not to leave the community of North Oakland without adequate protection. The station was completed "within specs, ahead of time, and under budget," as City Manager Robert Bobb put it.

Chief Simon reviewed 10 years of struggle to fund this new building to replace "an old, inadequate and hazardous structure." He praised Deputy Chief Ron Carter's contribution as OFD project coordinator and introduced OFD staffer Ray Dossa, who was present when the former building opened 50 years ago. Public Works Director Claudette Ford could not resist commenting that, "It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes a public works department to build a fire station."

The building's red-toned façade, with its graceful arches and deeply inset second-story windows, fits the neighborhood well and provides for modern firefighter living quarters with a restaurant-quality kitchen, housing safe from garage gasoline fumes, a deep bay to accommodate the huge new trucks, natural ventilation, energy-efficient appliances, an exercise room floored with ground-up tires, and formaldehyde-free cabinetry.

After the ribbon was cut, everyone surged into the station to explore and marvel at the shiny new gadgets and equipment. A slide show traced the stage-by-stage construction.

Two hours later, the station was quiet again, and as the sun set, the glass doors rolled down over the lighted interior. Fire Station 8 was officially open for business.

Hands On! Analyn, 11 mos old, examines her Uncle Jeff Norman's art work.

PHOTO: CLAIRE ISAACS









FROG Invites Neighbors to Support Hardy Park, Paint a Personal Tile

Rockridge families will have a final opportunity to make a tile that becomes a permanent part of Hardy Park. On April 19, Friends of Rockridge Greenbelt will hold its springtime, family-friendly maintenance day, when neighbors are invited to come help spruce up the FROGpark playgrounds for summer fun. For $25, families can paint a tile of their own, which will be glazed and mounted on the fence along the inside of the playground. Don't miss this opportunity to leave your family's mark on Rockridge.

Hamill

from page 1

"The core problem is we had a 4,300-student enrollment dip over the last five years at the same time… we were giving across the board wage increases," Hamill says. The bad projections are explained in part by a communication failure between Human Resources, which handles payroll, and the finance team that creates the budget. "Nobody's been able to tell us really how long it's been going on."

When the crisis was revealed, the County took over and assigned a fiscal adviser for the district. The fiscal advisory team said "they had never seen a system so dysfunctional in terms of no communication between two critical banks of information," Hamill says. "The problem was much bigger than we had guessed. But we're responsible, and the administration is responsible."

Hamill wants to make clear that the teachers are totally blameless. "At the time the teacher raise was given, everybody should have been clear that we did not have the money to pay for that raise in the second and third year," she says.

A $100 million bailout from the state government is being discussed. "I think we will get the money," Hamill says. "I hope we get all of it, but I am not sure." The state's own budget problems make the situation more difficult. "We're first in line, and everybody knows about our problem. That's the good news," says Hamill. "I think anybody who's thinking that the state is going to write us a check for $100 million without serious strings attached is dreaming."

One string is likely to be outside budget oversight. Having lost control of its finances, the Oakland Unified School District will face "a serious level of control over our finances for the next few years," Hamill says. "I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing."

Another string may involve leadership changes. Superintendent Chaconas "has a really good team that's helping him," Hamill says, referring to his district deputies as well as the school principals. "My guess is that the administrator would try to keep as many of those folks in place as possible because why would you want to mess with something that was working at a lot of places?"

Despite the bailout, schools will definitely face budget cutbacks. Chaconas has recommended reductions in security officers, custodial crews, and elementary prep teachers (they relieve teachers for lesson planning and meetings with parents while providing instruction in non-core areas such as music and art). Hamill disagrees with this approach and would like to see school principals have more freedom, at least in coming years, to make decisions about where to use reduced funds. The district restructuring will provide an opportunity, as Hamill sees it, to "do things a little bit differently, to give more autonomy to our schools sites." Some downsizing is inevitable, and charter schools may also face a tougher battle in getting approved for funding.

While the bottom line is getting all the attention these days, Hamill urges parents to take a look at "the great stuff going on" in the schools. "We've learned that we can do it in Oakland," she says. "The learning in this district continues to improve. The teaching continues to improve. This is not an educational crisis. It's a money crisis."

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Transit Agency Supports UnderBART Planning

by Teresa Drenick

North and south of the BART station, College Avenue is a vibrant, bustling street. Day and night, people stroll between shops, cafes and restaurants. Each month, exciting businesses open. But right in the middle of this thriving commercial district, the dark and unfriendly space under BART and the freeway splits the neighborhood in half. Pedestrian traffic tends to stop one side or the other of this physical and visual barrier. The barren space is often lonely and presents safety concerns.

Late last year, the Rockridge Community Planning Council organized a group of Rockridge citizens and business owners with the goal of improving the space under BART. At a January meeting, BART representatives told residents interested in the project that such improvements were a realistic goal. In fact, they said, other BART stations have recently been remodeled as a result of neighborhood efforts. Most recently, the 16th Street station in San Francisco was upgraded to include a plaza area with public artwork, seating and local vendors. Similar projects are in the works throughout the Bay Area, and BART welcomes the proposed changes.

At a brainstorming meeting in December, residents offered ideas for improvements. Their visions included fresh paint, new lighting, seating, tables, public art, landscape and hardscape (e.g., walls and pavers). Kiosks, coffee vendors, magazine racks and other business ideas were also discussed.

The next meeting, on February 13 at 7:30 p.m., will focus on creating a vision statement and a list of both short-term and long-term goals. Officials from BART and the City of Oakland are expected to participate. The group will gather on the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m., and meetings will be structured so that each session will result in significant strides toward the goal.

Anyone interested in participating in this exciting project is welcome to attend. The February 13 meeting will be at the Claremont House at 4500 Gilbert. Parking is available in the Safeway/Longs lot directly across Pleasant Valley Road. For more information, contact Teresa at TDrenick@aol.com

Caldecott

from page 1

www.caldecott-tunnel.com, studies the Highway 24 corridor between Highway 680 in Walnut Creek and Highway 580 in Oakland. "What it doesn't do," Whitfield says, "is look at the real capacity for the Bay Bridge and its toll plaza to digest westbound traffic during the morning commute." With 28 lanes, the toll plaza is already the world's largest, and the new east span of the Bay Bridge will accommodate exactly the same traffic flow as it does today.

Neither Caltrans nor anyone else has formally studied where traffic leaving Contra Costa in the morning goes, Whitfield acknowledges, but experience suggests that much, if not most, of it heads for the Bay Bridge. "Imagine that from the Caldecott Tunnel to the Bay Bridge, it's bumper to bumper, stop and go traffic every day," he says. "That's the worst-case scenario."

In such a situation, experience elsewhere in the Bay Area indicates that cars would get off the freeway and maneuver through surface streets, hoping to save time by cutting across to another freeway access point. That would mean more traffic on Miles and Forest, as well as Claremont, College, Alcatraz and Broadway. "It won't help to increase traffic flows out of Contra Costa if there's nowhere for that traffic to go," Whitfield says.

In fact, some impact may already be happening. Participants at the RCPC forum talked about high-speed traffic and U-turns on upper Presley, related to cars taking a shortcut to the freeway. In addition, residents on central Chabot have noticed an increased number of large delivery vans using their street instead of taking Claremont and College to get to the Albertson's Supermarket.

Besides collecting feedback on the Caldecott plan, the RCPC meeting looked at some tactical recommendations "if we're faced with the reality of a westbound bore," Whitfield said. "What do we need to do in Rockridge?"

Suggestions included building sound walls on the elevated section of Highway 24, where traffic noise would increase by 3 decibels according to one estimate. The walls would also provide some protection to neighboring homeowners. One Miles resident told the meeting he "doesn't sit in his backyard any more because of the debris and dust that comes off the freeway," Whitfield said. As for traffic flows, the timing of traffic lights would have to be re-examined. Mass transit options, including commuter lanes, are also notably absent from the Caltrans plan.

Caltrans has not specified in its plan whether an additional bore through the Caldecott Tunnel would be westbound or eastbound as they have sketched plans for both. An eastbound bore might provide some relief for Rockridge traffic doing a reverse commute into Contra Costa in the morning and ease congestion on the Highway 13 interchange.

Caltrans has been describing its plans at a series of local meetings, asking for feedback no later than January 30. An environmental impact report, along with a recommendation, is expected in two to five years. Caltrans would not be bound by the recommendation, but Public Hearings are required before any plan could go forward.

For more information on Rockridge traffic issues — or to participate in efforts to improve conditions — please contact Whitfield at michaeljwhitfield@hotmail.com

Home Burglary On the Rise In Rockridge

by Neil Getz

In 2002, a Rockridge resident was 50% more likely to be the victim of a residential burglary than a typical Oakland resident. Following a 23% drop from 2000 to 2001, Rockridge experienced a 58% jump in residential burglaries in 2002.

Residential burglary ranked third in Rockridge crime in 2002, behind auto burglary and auto theft. For those of you not clear on the distinction, auto burglary is stealing what is in a car, while auto theft is stealing the whole car — of course if you steal the whole car you get what is in it as a bonus. A Rockridge resident in 2002 was 45% more likely than the typical Oakland resident to be the victim of an auto burglary but 27% less likely to have a car stolen.

Non-residential burglaries are also on the rise with Rockridge experiencing a 56% rise over 2001 levels, though per capita levels are on par with the rest of Oakland.

And those long-time residents uncomfortable with Rockridge's increasingly uppity image may be comforted to know that in 2002 a Rockridge resident was just as likely to be robbed as any other Oakland resident.

The news is not all bad. Though Rockridge had Oakland's only incident of "Possess/Manufacture/Dispose of Firebomb," it had not one incident of Murder, Rape, Torture, or "Grand Theft: Animal Carcass." Be thankful because the same cannot be said for the rest of Oakland.

In 2002 petty theft continued its decline from its 1998 level. Overall 2002 crime, though 12.5% above 2001 levels, remained substantially below 1998-1999 levels.

These conclusions are drawn from this writer's analysis of data provided by the Crime Analysis Section of the Oakland Police Department. That analysis is summarized in the table at the bottom of page 7.

According to Sgt. Donny Williams of the Community Services Section of the Oak-

SEE "CRIME ANALYSIS," RIGHT, PAGE 7

ROCKRIDGE CRIME REPORT

Rockridge Area Crimes Reported to OPD

Report Period: 12/16/02 – 1/21/03

by Neil Getz

Date	Description	Location
12/16/02	Petty Theft: Shoplift	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
12/17/02	Robbery	Ayala & 57 St.
	Burglary: Auto	Birch (East end)
12/19/02	Burglary: Residential	Bryant (Ada - College)
	Burglary: Residential	63 St. (Dana - Canning)
12/20/02	Burglary: Auto	Brookside (Eustice - B'way)
	Vehicle Theft	49 St. (Lawton - Shafter)
	Vehicle Theft	Colby (60 St. - 61 St.)
	Burglary: Auto	62 St. (Colby - Canning)
12/21/02	Burglary: Residential	Manila (Clifton - Hudson)
12/22/02	Arson: Inhabited Structure/Property	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
12/23/02	Burglary: Auto	Brookside (Eustice - B'way)
	Burglary: Residential	Claremont & Martin
	Receive/Etc. Known Stolen Property	College & Miles
	Burglary: Auto	College & 63 St.
	Burglary: Auto	College & 63 St.
12/24/02	Petty Theft: Shoplift	Telegraph (51 St. - 51 St.)
	Theft: Personal Property [Over $400]	Harwood (College - Auburn)
12/25/02	Robbery	Telegraph & Alcatraz
12/26/02	Burglary: Auto	Manchester (Acacia - Ocean View)
	Robbery	College (Lawton - Taft)
	Vehicle Theft	College (Chabot - Oak Grove)
12/27/02	Vehicle Theft	B'way & Napa
	Burglary: Residential	Lawton (McMillan - B'way)
	Attempted Burglary: Auto	Mystic & Manoa
	Burglary: Auto	College & Oak Grove
	Burglary: Auto	McMillan & Lawton
	Burglary: Auto	McMillan & Lawton
12/28/02	Robbery	College (Bryant - Manila)
12/29/02	Burglary: Auto	Brookside (Eustice - B'way)
	Burglary: Residential	51 St. & Manila
	Vehicle Theft	College & Miles
	Grand Theft	Clarke (Claremont - 51 St.)
12/30/02	Grand Theft	Telegraph (65 St. - 66 St.)
	Petty Theft: Shoplift	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
	Burglary: Auto	51 St. & Manila
12/31/02	Burglary: Auto	51 St. & Miles
1/1/03	Grand Theft	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
1/2/03	Grand Theft	College (Keith - Ocean View)
	Personate to get Money/Property	Ayala & McAuley
1/3/03	Petty Theft w/Prior for Theft/Burglary/Robbery	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
	Robbery	Whitmore (Gilbert - Broadway)
	Inflict Corporal Injury on Spouse/Cohabitant	College & Ocean View
	Burglary: Auto	66 St & Telegraph
1/5/03	Attempted Burglary: Residential	Shafter (Cavour - Clifton)
	Vehicle Theft	Ross (Chabot - Miles)
1/6/03	Vehicle Theft	College (B'way - Clifton)
	Vehicle Theft	Clifton (Shafter - Locksley)
	Petty Theft w/ Prior for Theft/Burglary/Robbery	College (Birch - Miles)
1/7/03	Vehicle Theft	Bryant & Ada
	Theft: Personal Property	Kales (College - B'way)
1/8/03	Robbery	B'way & B'way Terr.
	Burglary: Auto	Miles & Presley
1/9/03	Burglary: Auto	Clifton (E of B'way)
	Personate to get Money/Property	49 St. (Lawton - Manila)
	Vehicle Theft	53 St. (Shattuck - Telegraph)
	Burglary: Auto	Telegraph (52 St. - 55 St.)
	Burglary: Residential	Chabot (Claremont - College)
	Personate to get Money/Property	College (Lawton - Taft)
	Burglary: Auto	College & Manila
1/10/03	Burglary: Auto	Clifton (E of B'way)
	Vehicle Theft	Manila (Clifton - Hudson)
	Petty Theft: Shoplift	College & Bryant
	Personate to get Money/Property [Over $400]	62 St. (Hillegass - College)

Continued top of next page

1/10/03	Burglary: Auto	Miles & Presley
1/11/03	Burglary: Residential	51 St. & Clarke
1/13/03	Robbery	Telegraph (52 St. - 55 St.)
	Burglary: Residential	Hudson (Lawton - James)
1/14/03	ADW* or GBI** Force: Not Firearm	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
	Theft: Personal Property	College & Bryant
1/15/03	Petty Theft: Auto Clout***	Claremont (College - Auburn)
	Burglary: Auto	Hudson (Manila - James)
1/16/03	Petty Theft: Shoplift	College (Birch - Miles)
	Burglary: Auto	Alcatraz & Regent
	Burglary: Auto	Manila (College - Bryant)
	Burglary: Auto	College & Oak Grove
1/17/03	Grand Theft	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
1/18/03	Vehicle Theft	Rockridge & B'way
	Burglary: Auto	Ocean View (B'way - Margarido)
	Vehicle Theft	Locksley & Hudson
	Burglary: Auto	Keith (McMillan - Presley)
	Burglary: Auto	Claremont & Martin
1/19/03	Burglary: Auto	Buena Vista (N of Golden Gate)
	Petty Theft: Auto Accessory	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
	Burglary: Commercial	College (Birch - Miles)
	Burglary: Auto	Claremont & Martin
1/20/03	Burglary: Auto	Telegraph (52 St. - 55 St.)
	Grand Theft	Boyd (Forest - Hudson)
1/21/03	Attempted Robbery	49 St. & Manila
	Burglary: Auto	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
	Attempted Robbery	Broadway (Coronado - 51 St.)
	Robbery	66 St & Telegraph
	Vehicle Theft	Shafter (Forest - Hudson)

Dial 911 to report crimes and suspicious actvity in progress.
(Cell phone users in Oakland, call 777-3211 for 911 service.)
Remember: If you don't report it, it didn't happen.

*ADW – Assault with a Deadly Weapon **GBI – Great Bodily Injury
***Auto Clout – a part of an automobile.

Crime Analysis

from page 6

land Police Department, Rockridge's easy freeway access, reputation for wealth, and abundance of homes that are vacant in the daytime make it attractive to burglars.

Lt. Lawrence Green, Police Service Area Commander for North Oakland, agrees. "You can't rely on the police to prevent home burglaries. With only one police officer per beat it would take an extraordinary coincidence for that officer to spot a burglary in progress."

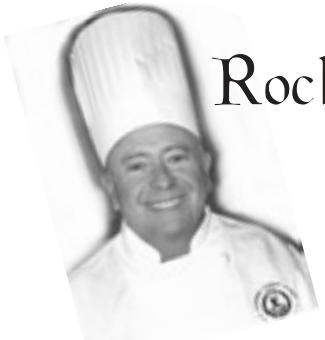
Yeda Altes, OPD Neighborhood Services Coordinator for Community Beat 12Y, says, "The level of participation of the Rockridge community in crime prevention has lagged behind the level of crime in Rockridge. Involvement of residents and merchants has been incident-driven. Many citizens seem unaware of suspicious activity, allowing it to go unreported." As Sgt. Williams points out, "a report of suspicious activity from a resident provides the necessary 'probable cause' for a police officer to stop and detain an individual or group."

SEE "CRIME ANALYSIS," PAGE 10

A Look at Crime in Rockridge and Oakland

Crime	Oakland			Rockridge (Beat 12Y)						
	2002			2002			2001	2000	1999	1998
	N	% Tot	P/100	N	% Tot	P/100	N	N	N	N
Burglary & Attempted Burglary: Auto*	5143	18.1%	1.29	195	28.5%	1.87	147	206	216	156
Auto Theft & Attempted Auto Theft*	5952	21.0%	1.49	113	16.5%	1.08	110	66	88	75
Burglary & Attempted Burglary: Residential*	2772	9.8%	0.69	109	15.9%	1.04	69	85	89	61
Petty Theft*	3253	11.5%	0.81	72	10.5%	0.69	72	73	122	157
Robbery & Attempted Robbery*	2205	7.8%	0.55	57	8.3%	0.55	53	44	50	40
Theft*	1420	5.0%	0.36	38	5.6%	0.36	34	29	41	31
Grand Theft & Attempted Grand Theft*	1443	5.1%	0.36	34	5.0%	0.33	39	38	50	59
Burglary & Attempted Burglary: Other*	1142	4.0%	0.29	25	3.7%	0.24	16	17	39	119
Personate to Get Money/Property*	948	3.3%	0.24	15	2.2%	0.14	24	6	2	3
Assault and/or Battery*	1596	5.6%	0.40	9	1.3%	0.09	14	16	14	16
Child Abuse*	460	1.6%	0.12	3	0.4%	0.03	10	5	2	8
Arson*	339	1.2%	0.08	3	0.4%	0.03	3	2	3	0
Inflict Corporal Injury on Spouse/Cohabitant*	459	1.6%	0.11	2	0.3%	0.02	1	4	3	5
Receive/Etc Known Stolen Property*	157	0.6%	0.04	2	0.3%	0.02	7	4	4	3
Elder/Dependent Adult Cruelty	22	0.1%	0.01	2	0.3%	0.02	0	0	0	0
Remove/Steal/Possess Shopping Cart*	32	0.1%	0.01	1	0.1%	0.01	0	3	0	0
Theft of Elder/Dependent Adult*	8	0.0%	0.00	1	0.1%	0.01	1	0	1	0
Exhibit Firearm in Presence of Reserve Peace Officer	5	0.0%	0.00	1	0.1%	0.01	0	0	0	0
Obtain Money/Etc by False Pretenses*	4	0.0%	0.00	1	0.1%	0.01	1	1	0	1
Possess/Manufacture/Dispose of Firebomb	1	0.0%	0.00	1	0.1%	0.01	0	0	0	0
Other Crimes	1018	3.6%	0.25	0	0.0%	0.00	7	5	11	19
TOTAL	**28379**	**100%**	**—**	**684**	**100%**	**—**	**608**	**604**	**735**	**753**

* Consolidated crime category which includes multiple OPD crime categories.
% Tot Percentage of the total number of crimes.
N Number of crimes.
P/100 Number of crimes per 100 residents.



Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

Good Morning, Vietnam!

Learn to eat before learning to walk.
— Vietnamese proverb

Freshly baked French-style baguettes, hearty beef noodle soup, rice paper rolls, banana flower salad, and savory rice flour crepes filled with roast pork, bean sprouts, shrimp, and coriander. These are only a few of the culinary delights of Vietnam. Although the French and Chinese have influenced Vietnamese cuisine, it retains a flavor and tradition uniquely its own.

Our recent nearly month-long trip to Vietnam introduced us to one of the great cuisines of the world. The Vietnamese seem to eat all day long, starting at 6 a.m. with pho (noodle soup) with either bo (beef) or ga (chicken). Served throughout Vietnam, pho is considered the country's national dish. For breakfast, people sit on the street at little food stands, chopsticks in one hand and a spoon in the other, eating large bowls of the fragrant pho. Between parked motorbikes and people sitting on little stools eating their morning pho, it is nearly impossible to walk on the sidewalks of Hanoi in the morning.

Pho is a slowly simmered beef broth, aromatic with star anise, cinnamon and ginger, poured over rice noodles and thinly sliced beef or chicken, then garnished with basil, coriander, lime, and sliced bird chile peppers. I loved starting my day with a steaming bowl of pho bo and didn't miss bagels or eggs.

On the banks of the Perfume River, the old imperial capital of Hue is home to the highest form of Vietnamese cooking. Intricate and delicious dishes were developed and prepared here, and sophisticated techniques and presentation skills define Hue-style cooking. Our eight-course imperial meal (for $10) was a classic example of food as art. What I thought was a bouquet of flowers turned out to be intricately carved fruits and vegetables served in a flower vase.

On another excursion in Hue, we spent over an hour walking in the rain trying to locate a food stall that supposedly had the best banh khoai in Vietnam. Banh khoai are crepes made of rice flour and ground yellow mung bean. The crepe is not turned and becomes very crisp. Every food stall has a different filling for the bahn khoai. The one we eventually found filled the crepes with bean sprouts, shrimp, roast pork, and a fried quail egg. The banh khoai is folded like an omelet and served with a delightful peanut dipping sauce.

Our food stall had only two tables, but the takeout orders kept an entire family busy cooking banh khoai. The phone never stopped ringing, and the crew would cook and pack the order up just as a motorbike arrived, its driver offering money with one hand and picking up the order with the other.

Like pho, spring rolls (nem in the north and cha goi in the south), are another staple served with anything and everything. Rice paper wrappers are filled with shrimp, thin rice noodles, shredded carrots and herbs. The rice paper is rolled up, deep-fried and served with the ubiquitous dipping sauce, nuoc cham. If you order "fresh" spring rolls, you can put the various fillings together yourself and roll your own. Other delicacies include banana flower salad, green papaya salad, shrimp mousse grilled on a thin sugar cane skewer and sticky rice.

In a previous Rockridge Cornucopia, I reviewed the numerous Asian restaurants on College Avenue – Chinese, Thai, Japanese, and Burmese. Sadly, we do not have a Vietnamese restaurant. The best Vietnamese restaurants are in Oakland's Chinatown. Check out Vi's for pho (an Alice Waters favorite) or May Hung for many traditional Hue-style dishes.

The following recipe is a fairly simple adaptation for pho bo. All of the ingredients are available at Yasai Market and Market Hall.

Hearty Vietnamese Beef Noodle Soup (pho bo)

(Serves 4)

Soup
5 cups of canned chicken broth
4 garlic cloves, peeled and smashed
½-inch piece of ginger, peeled and cut into 1/8 inch rounds and smashed
2 three-inch cinnamon sticks
2 star anise
2 tablespoons Asian fish sauce
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon sugar

Accompaniments and garnish
½-pound of thin dried rice noodles soaked in warm water for 15 minutes
1 pound of very lean beef, very thinly sliced into 1-2 inch slices
Limes cut into quarters
Cilantro
Bean sprouts
One or two serrano chiles thinly sliced

Bring all soup ingredients to a boil in saucepan. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover for 20 minutes. Remove solids with slotted spoon.

Drop rice noodles into boiling water and cook about 30 seconds. Add beef to broth and cook for about 2 minutes.

To serve, divide noodles and beef in individual bowls. Pour hot broth into bowls. Provide each guest with a spoon and a pair of chopsticks and a garnish plate of limes, cilantro, bean sprouts, and sliced chiles. Enjoy!


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Arts, Schools, Libraries in Jeopardy Again

As we all know by now, Governor Davis is having one tough time trying to keep the state from dissolving in red ink this year and next. The sheer size of the deficit is beyond what most of us can imagine.

But as we see the effects of the fiscal crisis creep into our own neighborhood, the seriousness of it all begins to hit home. Our public education and cultural institutions are suddenly in jeopardy. We find tottering arts and cultural programs, school and library closings, right in our midst. I hope we will all heed the call to protect, nurture, and support these great monuments of our civilization at this critical time.

Library Closings

The possible closings of Temescal, Melrose, and Golden Gate Libraries are being discussed even as we go to press. We are dismayed at this suggestion by City Manager Robert Bobb, who does not appear to have a full understanding of what libraries mean to the communities they serve.

Jeff Norman, of the Temescal community, has suggested that instead of closing a few neighborhood libraries, it may be fairer to cut hours at all library branches. That makes sense. The fear is



by Ortrun Niesar

that once a library is closed, it may never open again because of Robert Bobb's and Library Director Carmen Martinez's interest in moving from a neighborhood to a regional library system.

Before that happens, neighbors must meet to clarify just what purpose libraries serve in a community today. It should also be remembered that bond issues approved by Oakland voters paid for the libraries. For more ideas on how to get involved, you may reach Jeff at jnorman@california.com.



Opera Piccola

From her tiny office at the Methodist Church on Manila, Susannah Wood oversees the activities of ArtGate and Community Performances. ArtGate is a multidisciplinary residency program where artists work with students and teachers in the classroom to create art based on an important issue. Community Performances brings interactive theater to schools, libraries, senior centers, parks, museums, and community centers, where audiences may have little access to the performing arts.

Susannah just received the news that many nonprofits and public schools have lost their funding for enrichment programs like hers. Susannah is not giving up.

Both ArtGate and Community Performances are under the umbrella of Opera Piccola, which means "small works." Since 1993, Opera Piccola has brought magic to 45,000 inner-city children, youth and families via 150 free performances and 30 educational residencies annually. Susannah is desperately looking not only for financial support (however small), but also for volunteers. If you love the theater and working with children, give her a call at 658-0967.

Rockridge Oral History

Do you have a story to tell? Or would you enjoy listening to others tell their stories while recording them for future listeners? If so, you're just in time to help organize an oral history project for Rockridge. Please call 652-6664 or email oniesar@aol.com.





Crime Analysis

from page 7

If January is any indication, Rockridge residents have cause for some hope in 2003. Between January 1 and January 27 incidents of residential burglary and grand theft in 12Y were half what they were during the same period in 2002. Auto burglaries remained the same. Lock your cars, though. Vehicle theft in the same period has doubled, from 5 in 2002 to 10 in 2003.

For the purposes of this analysis Rockridge crime is characterized by Community Beat 12Y crime. Bounded on the south by 51st Street, on the east by Broadway, on the north by the Oakland-Berkeley line, and on the west by Telegraph, Beat 12Y is home to the vast majority of Rockridge residents. It also includes an area bounded by Telegraph, Claremont, Colby, and Alcatraz, not within the voting area of the Rockridge Community Planning Council. It does not include those parts of Rockridge east of Broadway, generally a low-crime area.

I am grateful to Marie Mason of the Oakland Police Department's Crime Analysis Section for supplying the data upon which the table is based.

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ROCKRIDGE ZONING COUNTER

Location: 4902 Broadway

Proposal: To construct an eight-unit residential building with approximately 525 square feet of ground floor commercial space.

Applicant: Thomas Dolan Architecture

Owner: Sean and Mike O'Neill

Planning Permits Required: Regular Design Review for residential construction; Minor Variance to allow all of the group open space to be placed on the roof (20 percent maximum allowed; 100 percent proposed)

Case Planner: Robert D. Merkamp, 238-6283 or rmerkamp@oaklandnet.com

Location: 6551 Telegraph Avenue

Proposal: to install retractable windows along Telegraph Avenue to create an unenclosed interior patio area. Owner/Applicant: Chuck Davis

Planning Permits Required: Regular Design Review for exterior alterations in the C-28 Zone

Case Planner: Darin Ranalletti, 238-3663 or dranalletti@oaklandnet.com

Location: 5690 Oak Grove Avenue

Proposal: To construct a second story rear addition to an existing single-family dwelling.

Applicant: Morgan Smith

Owner: Gregory J. Feist

Planning Permits Required: Special Residential Design Review for a residential addition; Minor Variance to provide for a rear addition with a 1.5 foot side yard setback (five feet required), resulting in 2,364 square feet of lot coverage (maximum of 2,080 square feet of lot coverage permitted).

Historic Status: Potentially Designated Historic Property; Survey rating C2+

Case Planner: Leigh McCullen, 238-4977 or lmccullen@oaklandnet.com.

Location: 5410-5418 College Avenue

Proposal: To renovate the existing building to accommodate three new commercial spaces. The building currently contains a manufacturing use.

Applicant: Kava Marsh

Owner: Paul Boero

Case Planner: Pete Vollmann, 238-6167

Location: 5823 Ross Street

(Note: This item is being republished from the January *Rockridge News* due to error in Historic Status information).

Proposal: To construct upper story additions to an existing single-family dwelling.

Applicant/Owner: Laura Zuckerman & Kirk McInnis

Planning Permits Required: Residential Design Review for additions to an existing single-family residence.

Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Status (PDHP); Survey rating:C2+

Case Planner: Anne Clevenger, 238-6980 or aclevenger@oaklandnet.com.

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Board Election

from page 1

received by March 20 and will be published in the April issue of *The Rockridge News*. Please include your address and telephone number in your mailing. Candidates will speak and voting will take place at the April 17 meeting.

Mail statements with photos to: RCPC, 5245 College Avenue PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618. For further information contact the Board Chair at GlenTripp@Yahoo.com or visit the website, http://www.rockridge.org

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February 15 Party for *Rockridge News* Volunteers!

Over 150 volunteers and their families will be honored at the February 15 *Rockridge News* Valentine's Party. A delicious buffet potluck supper will be served, a live jazz band will regale the crowd with its sweet tones, and Jim Beatty, bagpiper extraordinaire, will accompany partygoers in a sing-along. If you deliver The Rockridge News and have not yet received your personal invitation in the mail we want to know! Please call 547-3855 and leave your full name, telephone number and route number or route description or email that information to smontauk@juno.com. We will make sure you get the details about the party.



Bagpiper Jim Beatty will play- and sing-along with Valentine's Day partygoers.

If you have some spare time the first Friday of each month, the *Rockridge News* assembly team needs your help. From 4 to 6 p.m. we bundle and prepare the newsletter for pick up at the Rockridge home of a staff member. We'd love to have you join us. Also, a few more distributors have moved and their routes need covering. Many thanks to those who responded to the call for volunteers these last two months. The list below has some new routes and some old ones. If you have an extra half-hour a month to deliver the paper, please give us a call or an email and mention the route along with your name, address, phone (and email address if you have one). Call Susan at 547-3855 or email smontauk@juno.com

Block Captains Needed

(Parenthesis refer to number of drops.)

#03C: (23) Eucalyptus both sides from 32-100

#06I: (25) 5800 & 5900 Block of Margarido

#14B: (34) Both sides of Desmond between Coronado and 51st, and 51st from Broadway to Coronado.

#21G: (80) Along the odd numbers of 6000 Claremont (Hillegass to Claremont)

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The Global School: Charter Middle School Proposed for North Oakland

by Carolyn Krebs

During the past year, a group of Chabot Elementary parents and educators have been investigating the possibility of opening a small public middle school in North Oakland. The co-founders of the project, Rachel Wylde and Vicki Hammarstedt, recently received a federal development grant, administered by the California State Department of Education, for designing and implementing a charter middle school in the area. The school, called The Global School, is scheduled to open its doors in September 2004.

On January 8, the school's design team held its first parent information meeting for an audience of about 100 people at the Rockridge Branch Library. Co-founders Wylde and Hammarstedt outlined plans for the school.

Hammarstedt said typical middle-school students have the intellectual ability to succeed in school but lack behavioral and learning skills to keep them engaged in the process. Hammarstedt stressed the need for a small, personalized middle school with staff that truly wants to work with middle-school learners and can give their students support with health, social, and self-esteem issues to create a solid basis for academic success.

Wylde then described the philosophy and structure of the proposed small school. She envisions a school that, as its mission statement says, "will provide a 'global' education for middle-school students in two senses: by addressing the needs of the whole child--emotional, social, physical, and academic—and by gradually, with a broadening geographic focus each year, developing students' understanding of their world."

Among the key curriculum elements are project-based, hands-on instruction that stresses critical thinking and deep analysis of subjects; teacher evaluation of student achievement through portfolios and exhibitions of work, in addition to test scores; a small-group advisory system with students and staff to address social/family issues and study skills; and a strong emphasis on parent involvement and community-service learning.

If the proposal is approved, the school will open in 2004 with 100 sixth-grade students. The school will grow by one grade of 100 students per year, to a total enrollment of 300 students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. The goal is to have class sizes of about 25 students. Small classes will give teachers more time to form close relationships with their students, identify their learning styles and areas of strength and weakness, and individualize instruction.

The design team plans to conduct a series of focus groups throughout North Oakland for input on the middle-school needs of its varied communities and to address these concerns in the school's design. Prior to the school's enrollment period, they also will hold public meetings and network with neighborhood organizations with the goal of recruiting a student population that reflects the diversity of Oakland.

The next major challenges for the design team are gaining charter approval and locating an appropriate facility for the school. Heading the search is Rockridge resident and realtor Ron Kriss, who emphasized the need for everyone involved to be alert for possible school sites that have room to grow as enrollment increases.

The Global School design team has formed committees that will have responsibility for specific aspects of the school's development once the charter has been approved. If you would like to contact the school, send e-mail to theglobalschool@yahoo.com or phone 510/384-0473.

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Scouting Out the New and Exciting

The Neighborhood Merchant

by Theresa Nelson



Photo: Don Kinkead

Scout

Home – Garden – Travel

When you combine three things that most people enjoy — home, garden, and travel — you get *Scout*, an innovative new store on College Avenue. Each season, owner Paul Scott Silvera travels to a destination, "scouts" the best shopping, hotels, restaurants, and things to do, brings back items for home and garden inspired by that locale, and offers specialty tours to the site so you can have your own adventure.

In late January, the store was in transition, from the exotic drama of "Christmas in Venice" to the new, not-yet-announced spring location. The winter destination of Venice brought all the glitter of gold and the richness of jewel-toned fabrics and glass-beaded jewelry to the store. As Paul noted, his aim is "to offer what you might bring back for yourself from Venice: Murano glass, Venetian silk pillows, hand-painted masks, a garden trellis with Gothic arches like those of the Piazza San Marco." The related trip to Venice featured special architectural tours and shopping excursions and was offered through an independent travel agency.

Scout opened in April 2002 and offered a spring trip to England for the Chelsea Flower Show, followed by a summer adventure in the Hamptons (on Long Island, New York) and fall in Brussels. The Spring 2003 destination will be unveiled in March.

Combining regular items with special pieces that change with the season, Scout exudes a sense of fun and excitement about the world. Start with a vintage blue and white Pan Am travel bag — that's right, the one you may remember from years ago, when flying was still glamorous and people got dressed up to travel. Nearby is a large steamer trunk, covered with authentic stickers from the good old days of travel.

Several walls feature the old-fashioned pull-down roller maps, each one a history lesson in the changes the world has been through in the last 150 years. Vintage paper goods from all over the world pack one large bookcase, along with handcrafted paper and notebooks made by local artists and the stylish Oh Boy line of papers and accessories.

Ceramics have a special place in both the downstairs home display area and the upstairs garden area. Paul commissions local ceramicists to create works especially for Scout, such as the ceramic cannoli (which look good enough to eat), pumpkins, and even tiny silver shoes that will keep large pots raised off of your deck or table.

Among the most unusual items at Scout are the aromatherapy cleaning supplies. It's easy to imagine how cleaning could be — well, maybe not joyous but at least a bit more fun — if you were using lavender-pine all-purpose cleaner, or green tea-patchouli glass cleaner, jasmine lily hand soap, and lavender drawer liners.

Upstairs in the garden room, you'll find charming striped sling chairs — yes, like the ones your grandmother might have had on her front porch. They are smaller than today's oversize outdoor furniture but perfect for the smaller yards and decks of Arts & Crafts bungalows.

Paul is a Rockridge neighbor who was working as a corporate event planner for a large travel firm in San Francisco. He had been thinking about combining his passions for home, garden and travel into a single store, and the site of a former travel agency was the perfect location. Paul designed the display furniture, which looks like it came from long ago and far away, and his own line of notebooks with the Scout logo.

Photo: Lydia Gans



Scout owner Paul Scott Silvera and companion ready for adventure.

He notes that his colleagues, Jennifer Walker and Christopher Lee, play a major role in the store, adding their own perspectives to make the environment "the kind of place where you want to spend time." Paul said, "people are coming to Rockridge now for stores which are exciting and clever but still familiar and warm. People who live in this area are very independent, and prefer stores which are unique rather than chain stores, and this is why College Avenue has become one of the most exciting retail areas in the entire Bay Area."

Scout's own gift enclosure cards epitomize the sense of wit and fun in the store. The small cards feature quotes such as, "I bought it at the flea market so you can't take it back," "I want one too," "Open in private," and "Something from your wish list." They're the perfect finish for a gift for family, friend or yourself, from a store that "scouts" the unique and beautiful.

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Check Your...

Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

E-mail Rockridge News Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210, or mail to: Rockridge News Community Calendar, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the month.

Councilmember Jane Brunner's Community Advisory Meeting

First Saturday each month, 10am to noon. Peralta Elementary School: 460 63rd St. (parking on Alcatraz Ave., just east of Telegraph). Meeting Topic for Sat., Feb. 1: Senior Needs and Resources In North Oakland. Providers will present available programs and discuss how to make North Oakland more senior-friendly. An extra hour will be devoted to discussing the budget crisis and proposed spending cuts in Oakland. For more inf. and to get meeting topic for March 1st: 238-7001 or www.oaklandnet.com.

Oakland City Council Meeting

Every Tuesday, 7pm, City Hall

Oakland Planning Commission

1st and 3rd Wednesday each month, 6: 30pm, City Hall. Get agendas and details at www.oaklandnet.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Ave. Note: Library Closed Wednesday, Feb. 12 (Lincoln's Birthday) and Monday, Feb. 17 (Presidents' Day)

For Children:

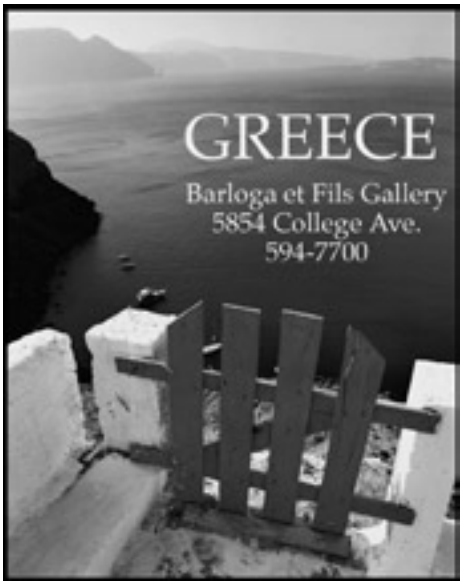
- Toddler Story Time on Saturday: 2/1, 2/8, 3/1 and 3/8 at 10:30am
- Pre-School Story Hours on Tues.: 2/4, 2/18, 3/4 and 3/8 at 10:30 and 11am
- Pajama Story Time on Wed.: 2/26 and 3/12 at 7pm

Special Events:

- "Dayo's Circle" will perform African music and dance: Wednesday, Feb. 5, 7pm
- Make a Valentine's Day Pop-up Card: Thursday, Feb. 6, 3:30 to 5:30pm

For Young Adults:

- Teen Advisory Council meets 2nd Thursday each month, 3:30- 5:30pm: February 13, March 13



For Adults:

- Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice. First Thursday of each month from 6 to 8pm. Sign-up begins 5pm.

Library Hours: Mon. Tues. Sat. 10am to 5:30pm Wed. Thurs. 12:30 to 8pm. Closed Fri. & Sun.
For more information call 597-5017
NOTE: The current budget crisis will create serious staffing and material cutbacks for the Library. Contact information (mail, phone and e-mail) is available at the Library for anyone who wants to express their opinions or suggestions to City staff.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings, Events

5433 College Ave. All Events are free and open to the public.

- Tuesday, Feb. 11, 7:30pm Juan Williams: This Far by Faith: Stories from the African-American Religious Experience.
- Wednesday, Feb.12, 7:30pm Geoff Dyer: Yoga for People Who Can't be Bothered to Do It. A collection of travel memoir essays.
- Thursday, Feb.13, 7:30pm Kate Moses: Wintering. A novel tracing the complex final months of Sylvia Plath.
- Monday, Feb.24, 7:30pm Lillian Faderman: Naked in the Promised Land. Autobiography
- Thursday, March 6, 7:30pm Dao Strom: Grass Roof, Tin Roof. A novel.
- Diesel Book Groups:
  Feb. 18, 7:30pm Anna Karenina by Tolstoy
  Feb. 25, 7:30pm The Corrections by Jonathan Franzen
- El Grupito – Spanish Language Discussion Group. Casual, friendly opportunity to improve your Spanish will meet on Tuesday, March 4 at 7:30pm. For more information: 653-9965 or www.dieselbookstore.com

Poets and Writers Meetings

Spasso Coffeehouse, 6021 College Ave., Oakland. First and third Saturday each month, 3:30 to 5: 30pm. Read and critique each other's work; occasional writing exercises.

Ad Astra Reading Series; Each Monday evening, 7pm; sign-up at 6:30pm. Featured reader, followed by Open-Mic. For more info, e-mail holly@hitx.com. For inf. on occasional free music events, call Spasso at 528-1818.

Comedy Showcase, Open Mic

Start your career in comedy at A'Cuppa Tea, 3200 College Ave, (corner of Alcatraz). Every Tuesday, 7:30 to 9pm. Be there by 7pm to sign up. Also: Every Sunday, free acoustic music performance 4 to 6pm. For more information call 420-0196.

College Avenue Adult Center

College Ave. Presbyterian Church, 5955 College Ave. Every Wednesday, open from 9:30am to 1:30pm. Light exercise, socializing, travel programs and music.

- Special programs 11am to noon
  2/5 Fitch Slides of Alaska.
  2/12 School children will visit to help celebrate the Center's anniversary
  2/19 Kathy's slides of Canadian Rockies
  2/26 VCR tape: History of USA in early days
  3/5 Slides of Alaska
- Field Trips
  2/8 Planetarium Anniversary Show at Golden Gate Park. Hot lunch available at noon for $1.75. For details and inf. on upcoming field trips and events, call Kathy at 531-6724

North Oakland Multipurpose Senior Center

5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Center Hours: Monday – Friday 8:45am to 4:45pm.
NOTE: closed 2/12, Lincoln's Birthday and 2/17, President's Day.

Some of the classes, workshops and events:

- Free health screening, Tuesday, Feb.25
- Health Insurance Counseling and advocacy, 2nd and 4th Mondays (2/10 and 2/24) from 1pm to 3:15pm
- AARP Tax assistance every Tuesday until tax day, beginning Feb. 4th
- Craft and sewing classes
- Walking groups and field trips

The Newsletter, "North Oakland Senior Times" provides a full schedule of classes and a monthly lunch menu. Suggested donation, seniors age 60+ $1.75 and $4 for those under 60. Call 597- 5085 for membership details, class or appointment times and volunteer opportunities.

Elder Care Support Group

Alta Bates Medical Center, Herrick Campus, 2001 Dwight Way, Berkeley, 3rd floor, room 3369B (take elevator B). Free for family/friends caring for older adults. 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4-5:30pm. For information on all Alta Bates/Sutter Health support/education groups, call Monica at 802-1725 or e-mail Monicalcsw@alum.calberkeley.org

Benefit: Julia Morgan Center

2640 College Avenue, Berkeley. Second Annual Valentine's Day Cabaret, Friday, February 14, 7pm Support our closest Performing Arts Center and celebrate love with a fun musical evening of song and dance with an ensemble from the Shotgun Players. Chocolate and Bubbly on the house. All proceeds benefit the services, programs and maintenance of the beautiful Julia Morgan building. Tickets: $20 in advance (call CBON ticket line: 925/798-1300) or $25 at the door. Call 845-8542 x302 for childcare (by reservation only) on the premises for kids 4 yrs. and older.

Volunteers Needed

- **Alameda County Community Food Bank**. Assist in the warehouse or office; staff the Hunger Hotline, the Food Bank's toll-free food referral service. Hotline shifts Mon-Fri, 9am-12pm and 1-4pm. Volunteer Mgr. Mary Schoen: 510/834-FOOD(3663) or www.accfb.org.
- **Oakland Elizabeth House:**

A Transitional Residence for Women and Children in Rockridge 6423 Colby St., Oakland. Residential and support services to homeless and low-income women and children. Orientation and training for new volunteers. Help with childcare, homework, mentoring, field trips and house chores.



Don Coelho

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