THE Rockridge News

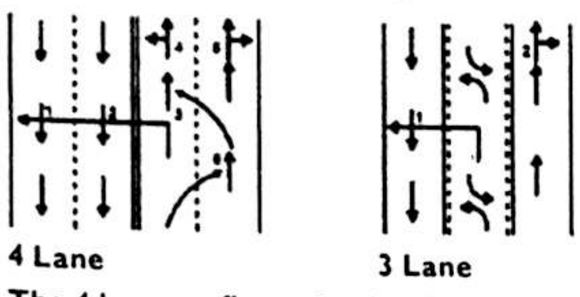
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VOL. 19 ■ NO. 7 ■ ISSUE NO. 203 ■ July 3, 2004 CIRCULATION: 5,100 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

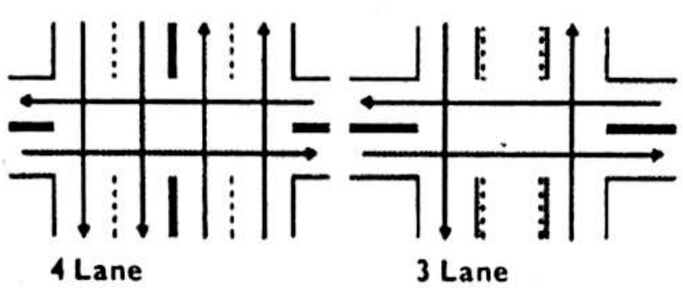
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July 15 RCPC Town Hall Meeting

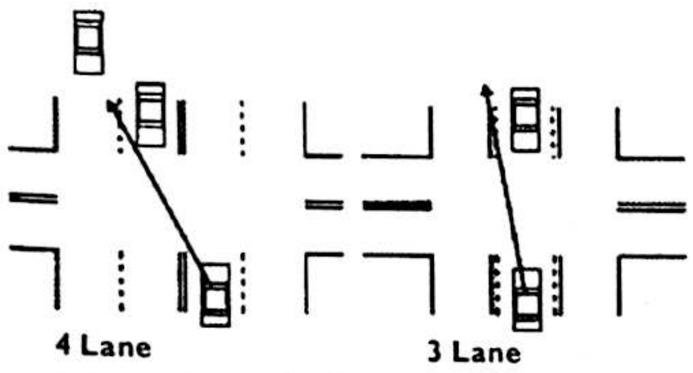
Should Claremont Avenue be Converted to Three Lanes?



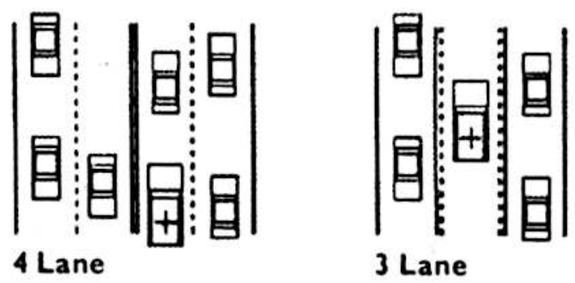
The 4 lane configuration has 3 times the number of midblock conflict points.



The 4 lane configuration has twice the number of cross-traffic conflict points.



Intersection sight distance is much improved with a three lane configuration.



Emergency vehicles will have less delay.

SCHEMATIC BY J. POTIS

Options for changes to Claremont Avenue that could make the local artery safer for pedestrians and motorists will be considered at RCPC's July Town Hall Meeting.

by John Potis, RCPC Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee Chair

The RCPC Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Committee and residents along Claremont Avenue have asked the City's Transportation Services department to consider changing Claremont to make it safer for pedestrians and motorists while not reducing traffic flow. City traffic experts will discuss options at RCPC's Town Hall Meeting Thursday, July 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the Rockridge Library.

RCPC is encouraging the City to evaluate converting Claremont from its existing four lanes to three, which would provide safety benefits without reducing traffic capacity. Statistics prove that two driving lanes with a central turning lane will result

▸ CLAREMONT AVENUE, PAGE 5

agenda: RCPC Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, July 15, 7:30 p.m., Rockridge Branch Library
5366 College Avenue at Manila — Community Room (Upstairs)

■ **Should Claremont Avenue Be Converted from 4 to 3 lanes?**

Representatives from Oakland's Transportation Services department and RCPC Traffic Committee Chair John Potis will discuss ways to make Claremont Avenue safer without compromising traffic flow. Among options to be considered at the town hall meeting is converting Rockridge's major artery from its existing four lanes to three with a central turning lane. The presentation will also evaluate ways to improve safety and calm traffic throughout Rockridge. Come prepared to share your ideas and ask the experts hard questions.

Jane Brunner, Patron Saint of Oakland Trees

Councilmember drafts tree-friendly ordinance

by Cy Gulassa



Jane Brunner

St. Patrick got sainthood by driving the snakes out of Ireland. If City Councilmember Jane Brunner gets her way, she'll get sainthood by driving the tree cutters out of Oakland.

Stunned by

▸ TREE ORDINANCE, PAGE 7

School Closings Highlight Need for Long-Term Planning

by Kerry Hamill, District One, OUSD

To be a thriving educational institution, the Oakland School District needs insightful, collaborative, long-term planning, especially as enrollment declines and pressure to close or reconfigure schools increases.



Kerry Hamill

Longfellow Elementary School, at 39th and Market Streets, closed its doors two week ago. Since 1999, enrollment there has dropped from 420 to 180 students, a trend projected to continue at other schools. Across the district, enrollment is down by 7,000 students and is expected to decline

▸ SCHOOL CLOSINGS, PAGE 12

A Fatal Robbery in Rockridge

Nyima Miguel Sorenson was fatally shot by a robber in the 5500 block of College Avenue at 2 a.m. Friday, June 25, after leaving the Hut where he celebrated his 26th birthday. The RCPC Board of Directors extends its deepest sympathy to the family and friends. Crime Stoppers of Oakland is offering a reward for information leading to the arrest of the killer—call the anonymous hotline at 238-6946, or the police at 238-3821.

The murder and other neighborhood criminal activities will be discussed at the next meeting of the Rockridge Crime Prevention Council, Tuesday, 7 p.m., July 20 in Station 8 Firehouse, 463 51st Street at Telegraph. Other NCPC information is on page 4. The last fatal robbery in Rockridge occurred seven years ago when Lisa Smith was murdered as she walked home from BART at 12:45 a.m, June 10, 1997.

Claremont Hotel Still Locked in Two-Year Labor Dispute

Local officials and businesses support boycott of famous spa

by Jessica Pitt, RCPC Vice Chair

Over the past several months you may have noticed small, white lawn signs in yards around Rockridge calling for a boycott of the Claremont Resort and Spa. The signs are part of a two-and-a-half-year campaign by workers at the Claremont to win a new labor contract with KSL Recreation, the company that owned the Claremont until mid-February when the resort complexwas sold to a new owner.

The majestic Claremont hotel, which sits above Rockridge, has been involved in a labor dispute since 2001, when Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE Local 2850) began negotiations for new contracts on behalf of 150 food and beverage workers and 80 room cleaners and front desk workers. At the same time, Spa workers were attempting to join the union. When bargaining talks broke down over the workers' demand for healthcare coverage, a living wage, and the right to unionize, they resorted to one of the most powerful and effective tools that workers can use to get management to take their needs seriously: a boycott.

On May 1, 2002, Claremont workers overwhelmingly authorized a boycott of the hotel and took their grievances to the National Labor Relations Board, which ruled in November 2002 that KSL Management had committed multiple violations of federal labor laws. KSL Recreation maintains that its offer provides generous wage and benefit gains given the struggling economy, which has hit the tourism industry particularly hard. Furthermore, it has accused the union of deliberately stalling negotiations and repeatedly rejecting offers to bring in a mediator.

Dozens of prominent individuals and organizations have endorsed the boycott, including City Councilmember Jane Brunner, Assemblywomen Loni Hancock and Wilma Chan, and State Senator Don Perata. Religious leaders and students at UC Berkeley formed support committees. Several large clients, including Kaiser Permanente (the Claremont's single largest client), the Port of Oakland, and the UC Berkeley Office of the Chancellor, pulled their business from the hotel.

In February the Claremont was sold to CNL Hospitality.

▸ Claremont Strike, page 4

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Dry Cleaning only ☛ Present with incoming order

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Garden Cleaners
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ROCKRIDGE BRANCH LIBRARY

5366 College Avenue
597-5017
NEW HOURS:
Tuesday: 12:30 – 8 p.m.
Weds, Thurs, Sat: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Friday 12 – 5:30 p.m.
Sunday, Monday CLOSED
LIBRARY DETAILS: SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15.

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

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

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Publication date of the next issue is
☛ September 5, 2004 (No issue in August)
☛ September deadline is August 19.

Advertising rates are $22/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. To advertise, call Jo Ellis at 653-3210, or e-mail joellis1@hotmail.com. ***(RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate.)***

In My Opinion

How To Make BART Come Clean

by Anonymous (by request)

When the pigeon droppings are bad enough to make the newspapers (as they have in recent months), you know that the situation is beyond bad. As a BART Station Agent and Rockridge resident, I have been put off for years by the lack of sanitation at my neighborhood station. Since joining BART one year ago I have learned how change happens at BART. It doesn't come from me, it comes from you.

BART management responds to comment cards. Really. Honest. I can scream until I am blue in the face, but even just a handful of patron complaints will get results. The good news is, BART cares about Rockridge. Not only do a lot of loyal customers commute through Rockridge each weekday, management believes that Rockridge patrons have wealth and influence. Currently, BART gets a lot more janitorial labor hours than a lot of other stations.

But what about the outdoor cleaning, the hundreds of pigeons who make homes in the Rockridge parking lot and bathrooms out of your cars? Because so many patrons oppose harming the birds in any way, nets have been the best option. So how come they don't work? They aren't sufficiently maintained. It's a matter of money. If a few dozen (or a few hundred) patrons complained, effective netting would be installed. If patrons demanded it, BART would also have the parking lot power washed more frequently.

How about those funky seats? Ever wonder why certain train cars smell odd? I can tell you specifically, but I won't, as children read this newspaper. BART recently decided to meet a budget shortfall by doing layoffs (despite upper management taking year-end bonuses or a 9% pay increase just six months ago.) A huge chunk of the layoffs was of car cleaners, people who literally break their backs cleaning filth (again, no graphic stories due to childrens' readership) and are barely paid a living wage. BART cleaners work extremely hard, have ever-longer lists of areas to cover, and certainly don't get year-end bonuses. And now, there aren't enough of them to keep BART healthy and safe.

"War is over if you want it!" John and Yoko's sentiment applies to your commute. BART *will* be cleaner of you want it – if you take the time to fill out a comment card and drop it in the mail. If only ending an actual war were so simple. Wait, filling out an absentee ballot for the presidential election is that easy. But back to the issue at hand. BART does listen to patrons and there is power in numbers. Tell 'em you want clean trains. Tell 'em you want safer, brightly lit parking lots at night. Tell 'em you want more police patrolling the system. Tell 'em you want the same anti-terrorism programs that they have in New York and DC. Tell 'em you want to see Station Agents in Armani. Okay, okay, I can dream, can't I?

Speaking of which, how do you get the best service from your Station Agent? Pity her. She's been harassed, propositioned, flashed, and sworn at. She's seen more urine than anyone ever should. She's been blamed for hundreds of late trains, had racist slurs hurled at her, and has given directions to the ballgame about 18,000 times. To top it all off, she is required to wear polyester pants. Yes, she needs to be responsive and helpful. Just bear in mind what kind of days she's had when you are asking for a comment card and there are three people screaming for assistance behind you. Alternatively, you can go to http://www.bart.gov/guide/overview/riderFeedback.asp to contact BART customer service.

May you get more from your ticket money!



Meet cartoonist Tom Meyer !!

A DIFFERENT ANGLE Gallery
will be hosting an opportunity to meet
political cartoonist Tom Meyer of the SF
Chronicle on Saturday July 24 , 2-4pm
Original cartoons available for purchase

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www.adifferentangle.net

The Zoning Counter

The Zoning Counter provides Rockridge residents with an opportunity to review construction project proposals to be undertaken in their neighborhoods. While it is a compilation of recent applications filed with the Oakland Planning Department, it is not necessarily a complete or up-to-date listing. Individuals may contact the Case Planner or the Planning Department for additional information.

398 61st Street

Proposal: To convert existing fourplex into condominium units

Applicant: Mudita Nisker

Contact Person/Phone Number: Mudita Nisker 655-2126

Owner: Mudita Nisker

Planning Permits Required: Tentative Parcel Map to create four condominium units

Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Property (PDHP);

Survey Rating: D2+

Case Planner: Maurice Brenyah-Addow at 238-6342 or mbrenyah@oaklandnet.com

Khana Peena: An Indian Restaurant on College Avenue

Where: 5316 College Ave. (by Bryant where the former convenience liquor store was located)

What: a 2600 sq. ft. space, 75-100 seats with more than half located outside.

Architectural features: A skylight-dome with free standing, decorative iron work as tall as the existing building situated on top; outdoor eating patio; sign board at the corner with a clock.

Concerns? Comments? Contact: Jessica Pitt, RCPC Land Use Committee: Jessica, 655-1210, jpitt36@earthlink.net; Darin Ranelletti, City Case Planner; 238-3663 or Dranelletti@oaklandnet.com

5316 College Avenue

Proposal: Establish a new General Food Sales Commercial Activity (restaurant) in an existing building.

Applicant: Robert Malone, Baywood Building & Design

Contact Person/Phone Number: Robert Malone 510/595-4231

Owner: Youssef G. Numeir

Planning Permits Required: Minor Conditional Use Permit to allow a General Food Sales Commercial Activity; Regular Design Review to allow alterations to an existing Nonresidential Facility; Minor Variance to allow a 0' setback where 10' minimum is required (along Bryant Street)

Case Planner: Darin Ranelletti at 238-3663 or dranelletti@oaklandnet.com

Public Outrage Forces Changes To Oakland Business Tax

Modifications postponed to 2006

by Susan Montauk

Thanks to public outrage, Oakland's Tax Compliance Program was a major item at the City Council's June 10 budget meeting. Protests arose in March when thousands of Oaklanders were billed for three years' back taxes plus interest and penalties as because State Assembly Bill 63 empowered Oakland and other California cities, to obtain confidential State tax information. The tax records enabled the City to identify close to 14,000 Oakland residents who filed schedule Cs for their home businesses but did not pay the required city tax.

Representatives from a "Neighbors for Fair Taxation" group spoke to committee members Jane Brunner, Henry Chang and Danny Wan about the inequities and potential illegalities of the tax. This newly formed group consists of Oakland residents who engage in self-contracted work and use business code F on the Business Tax Table.

Mr. Wan proposed waiving the penalties and interest, but backtracked when he learned the City would lose $6 million. Staff members were directed to investigate extending the payment deadline and not taxing income earned outside Oakland.

Staff members proposed alternatives, including the cost of a graduated tax scale for businesses earning less than $5,000 or exempting altogether those with gross receipts of less than $5,000 or less than $2,500. The Council chose the least costly option—to exempt businesses earning less than $2,500—and postponed implementation until 2006. The loss of future tax receipts is estimated to be $280,000 yearly.

The fines remain in force. The City Attorney ruled that an extension for payment of fines to just one group of taxpayers (code F) would be unconstitutional.

Final budget review and approval are slated for June 29. For e-mail discussions of the proposals, join the biztaxprotest group at www.yahoogroups.com.

Rockridge Crime Prevention Council Sets Priorities

by Susan Montauk

The Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) Steering Committee meets monthly to set priorities for the Oakland Police Department in beats 12Y and 13X. Citizens with particular concerns are invited to attend these meetings held on the third Tuesday of most months at the Station 8 Firehouse, 51st near Telegraph Avenue. Go to www.rockridgencpc.com for further NCPC information.

The following priorities are set for beats 12Y & 13X for June 2004

12Y

1. **300 block of 62nd Street:** OHA drug activity, gambling, arrest & possible retaliation to neighbors. Suspects on bicycles, MBs all in white T-shirts w/ matching head bands, blue jeans. Nexus to drug activity at surrounding OHA locations: Colby, Canning/59th, North Street, Dana/Alcatraz. Suspects may be part of North Pole gang, some on bicycles.

2. **5900 Telegraph Avenue,** Jim's 'Lectric Washhouse: Loitering, drug dealing, vandalism. One-block radius from the Telegraph and 59th Street intersection is of ongoing concern.

3. **Ross Circle** problem house: Residence of WM juvenile, 14-15 years old, often reported carrying a yellow bucket and associated with criminal activity in neighborhood.

13X

5300 block of Belgrave Place: Area residents have reported loud music from parked cars in front of one residence and verbal threats from its occupants that include possible use of firearms.

Claremont Strike, from page 2

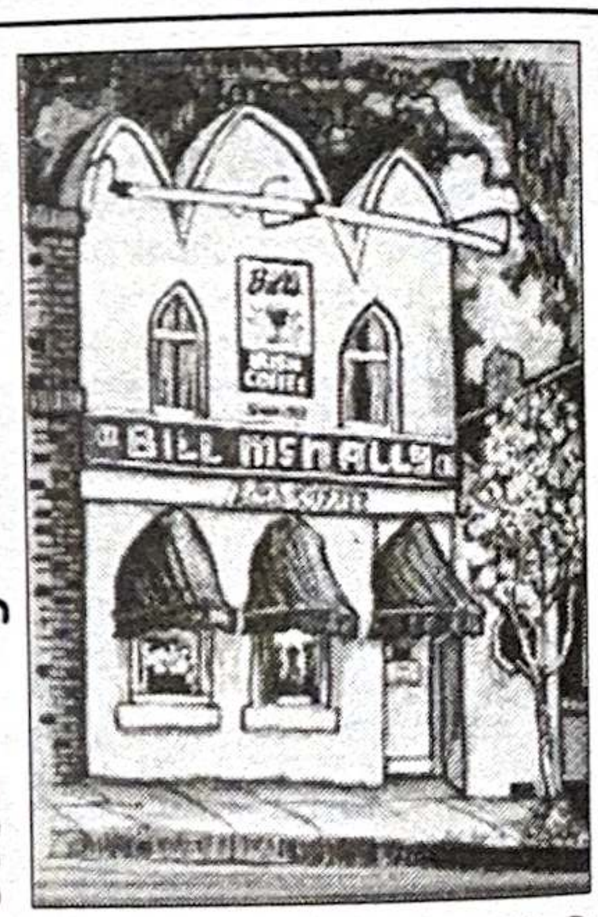
Workers see the sale as an opportunity for new management but are only cautiously optimistic. KSL Recreation is acting as interim manager; a new contract has yet to be negotiated.

Spurred by the Claremont boycott, Councilmembers Jane Brunner and Ignacio De La Fuente proposed an ordinance that would protect Oakland workers when large hotels and food service companies change ownership. The ordinance would protect workers from layoffs for 120 days after a company changes ownership. Laid-off workers would be given the first opportunity at returning for at least a year. Although Brunner acknowledges that the ordinance offers only modest protection to workers, she adds that it would at least provide workers with notice that they may need to find a new job and give them four months of health coverage.

The union vows to continue its fight for better pay and benefits until new contracts are agreed upon. Until then, the boycott will continue.

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Claremont Avenue

from page 1

in lower auto speeds, fewer crashes, reduced severity of crashes, safer entry and exits, safer crossing for pedestrians, and room for bicycle lanes.

Pedestrians would be safer crossing Claremont because drivers will see them sooner, and they can use the center turn lane as a safe refuge while waiting for traffic to clear. Bike lanes not only would provide a clear path for cycling, they also create more room for parallel parking and make it safer to get in and out of parked vehicles. Pedestrians will also appreciate the increased distance from passing traffic.

While it may seem counter-intuitive, lane conversion will not reduce traffic flow. Intersections now limit capacity of the artery and the center lanes already function as de-facto, dedicated left turn lanes during peak hours—just ask any driver stuck behind a left-turning vehicle. Thus, no additional delays or backups will be created by the conversion.

For a more detailed explanation of the benefits of a four to three lane conversion, visit http://www.walkable.org/download/rdiets.pdf and http://www.walkable.org/4-3CON%7E1.PDF.

Please come to the July 15 Town Hall Meeting well informed of pros and cons and be ready to ask the experts hard questions.

Rockridge Goes Green With Pocket Parks



Construction of Rockridge's Locksley Pocket Park is underway. The park will include plantings of native California flora, butterfly gardens, recycled gray water, children's gardens, solar lighting and other garden elements.
PHOTO: KRISTIN PERSONETT

by Kristin Personett

Rockridge goes green with the addition of the Locksley Pocket Park on the corner of Locksley Street and Forest Avenue (across from the Rockridge BART station). Locksley Park is the first in a series planned for construction in Rockridge by the Pocket Park Committee, spearheaded by RCPC Boardmember Michael McDonald .

The Pocket Park Program facilitates development of small neighborhood parks in underutilized or "left-over" urban space. Using a kit-of-parts design tool, the Pocket Park Program is a community-building pilot project that improves the beauty and identity of neighborhoods.

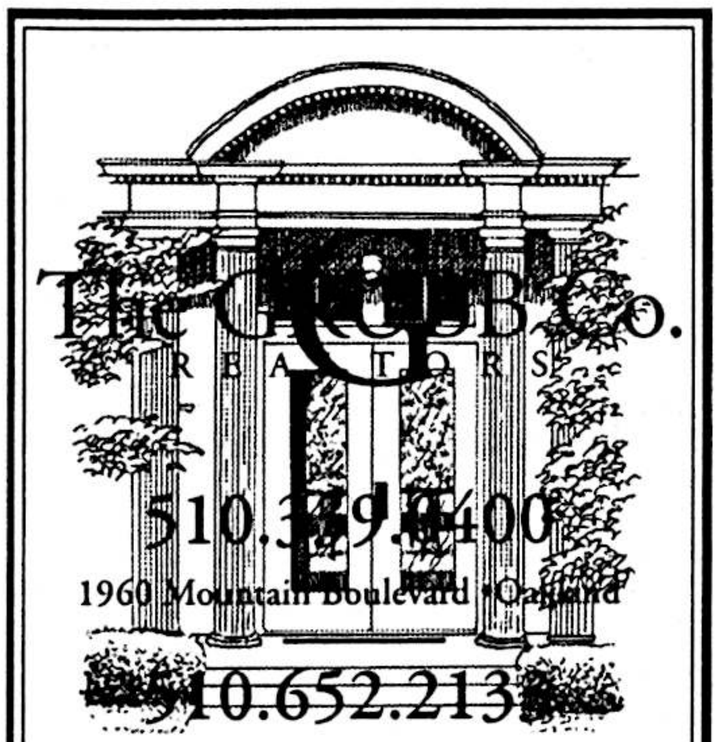
The Pocket Park Program template, designed by landscape and architectural designer Kristin Personett of Indigo Design Group (www.i-designgroup.com), includes water-wise plantings of native California flora, butterfly gardens, recycled gray water, children's educational gardens and solar powered lighting. Concrete Works, (www.concreteworks.com) an Oakland based design firm, also contributed to the Pocket Park template by fabricating garden elements from recycled concrete blocks.

Construction of Locksley Pocket Park kicked off with a neighborhood clean up and tree planting ceremony on whole Earth Day, fueled by refreshments donated by the Green Bean on Claremont Avenue.

In a spectacular show of community support, over 40 volunteers from the surrounding neighborhood contributed their time and hard work to the initial clean-up phase.

The Pocket Park Program is raising funds for this and future projects. To donate, contact David Lee at dcLee.adr@sbcglobal.net or 510/547-1548.

Make checks payable to "The Locksley Gardens Project." Donations are tax deductible with RCPC acting as the fiscal agent, and donors will be recognized with a commemorative display on the Locksley site.




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Frog Park Phase Two Needs Your Help to Succeed

RCPC contributes $2,500

by Theresa Nelson, RCPC Board Member and Parks Committee Liaison

With plans for Phase Two almost done and a date set for fall construction, community members are eagerly anticipating completion of the Rockridge-Temescal Greenbelt, more popularly known as Frog Park.

Over the past two-and-a-half years, Frog Park has become a central feature of the community, providing two imaginative play structures, a lovely strolling path, full access for the disabled to Temescal Creek at Redondo, and a restored *Oceanus* mural. Most important, community use of the park has grown significantly; it's a fun-filled, safe place for kids and family outings.

Now you can help complete Phase Two of the Park. We must raise $25,000 from the community to finish the project and match funds previously committed. Hoping to continue to spur community generosity, RCPC, which already contributed $10,000 to Phase One, has recently pledged a matching grant of $2,500 to Phase Two. Your gift will serve double duty by helping to pay for items as well as match grant requirements.

There are exciting new opportunities for giving in Phase Two as well as for back funding Phase One items. All gifts of $250 or more will be acknowledged on the main park plaque, which will be erected as part of Phase Two along with the long-awaited bench plaques.

If you're new to the Rockridge-Temescal area, or just did not get around to contributing in 2001, this is your last chance to be a part of neighborhood history by making a financial contribution. Take a look at the list of opportunities on page 7 (at right), select items that match your interests, and enclose your check or credit card information with the form below. Your gift is fully tax deductible, and your employers may match your gift as well.

In other park news, negotiations are still underway to obtain $150,000 from Measure DD funds for native plant and creek restoration. Frog Park Committee members are working with City Watershed program staff and the City Council to secure the funding and would appreciate your support. Write: Watershed Improvement Program, City of Oakland, 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Suite 5301, Oakland, CA 94612, phone: 238-6600, e-mail: watersheds@oaklandnet.com. Please send a copy of your message to: Councilmember Jane Brunner, Oakland City Council, One Frank Ogawa Plaza, 2nd Floor, Oakland CA 94618; phone 238-7001, e-mail: jbrunner@oaklandnet.com; and to the Parks liaison of RCPC at: theresarockridge@yahoo.com.

FROG Park Donation Form

- ❒ I'll sponsor/contribute toward the following piece of park equipment (from the list on the next page): _____ for $_____.
- ❒ Here's my general donation to the new Greenbelt Park for $_____.
- ❒ My check is enclosed.
- ❒ Charge my credit card (circle one) VISA Mastercard

Name on card: _____

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name: _____ Email: _____

Company or Family Name (for acknowledgment): _____

StreetAddress: _____

City / Zip code: _____ Phone: _____

Send this form with your check or credit card information payable to: RCPC/FrogPark, 5245 College Ave PMB #311, Oakland, CA 94618. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Federal tax ID#94-3011284. For more info call: 510/644-4228.

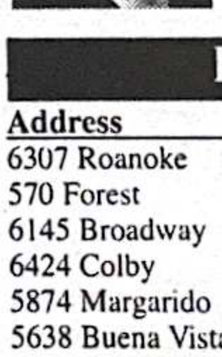


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Rockridge Sales in June Soar for the Summer!

Address	List Pr	Selling Pr	Close Date
6307 Roanoke	$595K	$715K	6/02/04
570 Forest	$659K	$784K	6/04/04
6145 Broadway	$799K	$800K	6/10/04
6424 Colby	$639K	$800K	6/10/04
5874 Margarido	$1,295K	$1,435K	6/11/04
5638 Buena Vista	$769K	$875K	6/15/04
6114 Lawton	$959K	$1,090K	6/15/04
6016 Acacia	$1,495K	$1,485K	6/18/04
5824 Ross	$949K	$1,100K	6/22/04
5652 Oak Grove	$799K	$903K	6/22/04
5408 Lawton	$650K	$805K	6/23/04
6141 Rockridge Bl	$679K	$750K	6/24/04

In June, properties in Rockridge sold with an average of 12 days on the market! That's 6 days less than last month!

Visit my website at www.eastbayhouse.com!

If you're thinking of buying or selling, give me a call for a free consultation.

YES, I WANT TO HELP COMPLETE THE ROCKRIDGE * TEMESCAL GREENBELT!

We need to raise up to $25,000 from the community to complete Phase Two of the entire Greenbelt. City and State bond funds will pay for most of this phase, but without community support, we will have to scale back and even eliminate some park elements! You can make it all happen with a general donation or one dedicated to a specific item like a swing.
For gifts over $250, your company or family name will appear on the main park plaque.
Use the coupon on page 6. Below is a list of special park elements you may underwrite:

General Dontation Opportunities

Butterfly Garden	$5,000
Adopt-a-foot ($/ft)	$50

Hardy Park and Pathway Donation Opportunities

Large Basketball Court	$50,000
Small Basketball Court	$25,000
Public art/creek interpretation	$25,000
Native Vegetation Clifton/Cavour	$25,000
New Dog Park Fence	$15,000
Entire swing set	$15,000
Asphalt Play Area under freeway	$3,000
Swings (3)	$2,500
Drinking Fountain	$2,500
Entry Markers	$1,500
Basketball Hoops	$1,200
Large Pavers	$500
Small Pavers	$250
Boulders	$100

Playground Donation Opportunities

Curly Slide	$3,500
Maze	$2,500
Wheelchair Ramping, Redondo	$2,000
Trading Post	$1,500
Ohlone House	$1,500
Vertical Tire Tunnel	$1,250
Slide	$1,200
Spider Web	$1,000
Fire Pole	$700
Rubber Bridge	$650
Climbing Net	$500
Chin-Up Pipe	$150

Tree Ordinance

from page 1

the "sidewalks are more important than trees" attitude of Oakland's Public Works Agency, which recently urged removal of trees for infractions like growing to within one foot of a utility pole or two feet of a driveway, Brunner called public meetings last spring where tree lovers almost unanimously voiced disapproval. With the help of citizen volunteers and a staff spurred on by over a thousand letters of protest, she drafted a tree-friendly ordinance that is now scheduled for a second hearing before the Life Enrichment Committee on July 13. If approved, it will go to the City Council for adoption. She accomplished this in just a few months, a triumph of Brunner over bureaucracy.

Trees annoyed the Public Works Agency because they tend to provoke mischief and buckle sidewalks that cause a few unwary pedestrians to trip and sue. In its view, sidewalk safety trumps trees. In Brunner's view, both are equally important. A major premise of her ordinance is that street trees are not just trees, they are stalwarts of the urban landscape and should never be cut down without serious justification. In addition to enhancing the environment, a big tree serves invaluable infrastructure duty. It absorbs rain runoff, removes air pollutants, conserves energy and adds significantly to the value of a house.

The intrinsic worth of a tree and its contribution to the environment have to be weighed, Brunner insists, against the costs of sidewalk repair and the major expense of tree removal, which can run upwards of $5000 per tree. In most cases, sidewalks can be repaired in aesthetically pleasing ways at minimal cost without having to damage the tree. Instead of plowing through a root, for example, the new walk could go over it or meander around the tree. A mature oak can add as much as $50,000 to the value of a house today, according to landscape architect John Potis.

In part, the Brunner ordinance would require that:

- The City retain as many large, mature trees as possible while repairing damaged sidewalks and streets;
- All feasible alternatives be evaluated before removing a tree;
- Trees be replaced with the largest appropriate size;
- Tree removal, sidewalk repair, and tree replanting at a given site be considered as a single, coordinated project;
- Penalties be assessed for trees harmed during sidewalk repair, garbage collection, pruning for power lines, or private development where harm was avoidable;
- 30-day notice be given before sidewalk repair begins.

While the above, pending Council approval, are to be implemented immediately at no extra cost to the City, the Brunner ordinance also includes items that require financial analysis before implementation, chief among them:

♦ Tree Ordinance, page 13

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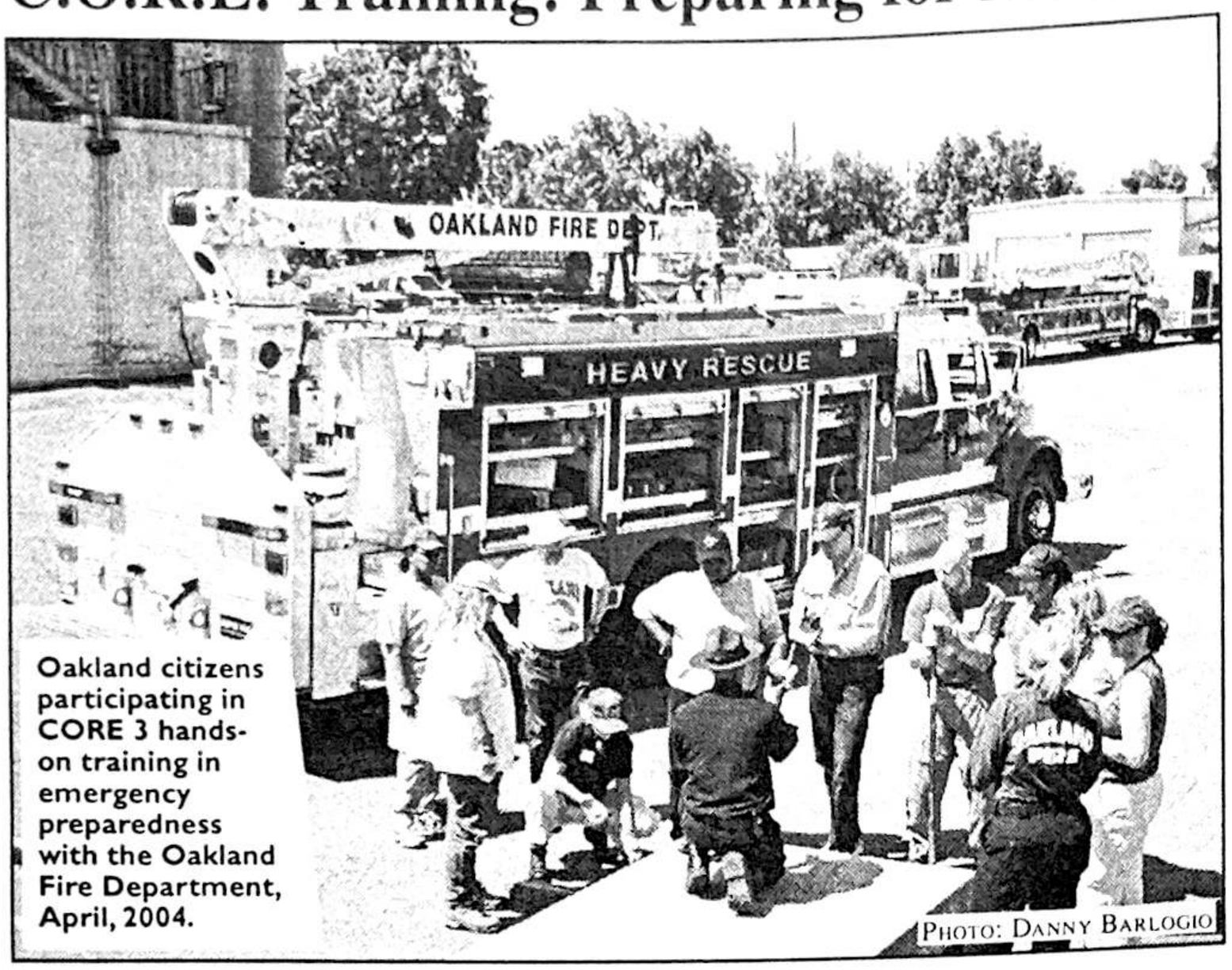


Linda Fino
Escrow Coordinator



Jan Carlisle
Administrative Assistant

C.O.R.E. Training: Preparing for Disaster



Oakland citizens participating in CORE 3 hands-on training in emergency preparedness with the Oakland Fire Department, April, 2004.

by Deborah Weinstein, RCPC Co-Chair

Harriet Wright, Emergency Planning Coordinator, offered great group exercises at RCPC's June 17 Town Hall Meeting as part of the Oakland Fire Department Office of Emergency Services' CORE program (Citizens of Oakland Respond to Emergencies). CORE is a free, 3-part training program that helps neighborhoods prepare for a large-scale emergency or disaster.

CORE teaches what you can do to be safer during a disaster – and how to protect yourself, your family and your neighbors. Some experts predict a 60% chance of a major earthquake on the Hayward fault in the next 30 years. Will you be prepared?

CORE 1 – Individual & Family Preparedness:

- Reduce household hazards;
- Store emergency supplies;
- Earthquakes: What to do;
- Evacuation and family plans.

CORE 2 – Neighborhood Emergency Response

- Create a neighborhood map;
- Perform damage assessment;
- Establish a command post;
- Form response teams.

CORE 3 – Hands on Training

- On-duty firefighters teach your group at the Oakland Fire Training Center for three 2-hour classes, developing hands-on skills and practicing them in a simulated Disaster Drill. (Part 1 & 2 must be completed first.)

A group in Rockridge will be meeting on Monday, July 19 to complete CORE 1 and Tuesday, August 31 to complete CORE 2. Both meetings are from 7-9 p.m. in the Rockridge Library Community Room. If you are interested in participating, contact Deborah Weinstein at 595-3352, or e-mail deborahlweinstein@yahoo.com.

RDA Hosts Brown Bag Forum on Back Care

The Rockridge District Association (RDA) will host Backs in Rockridge, a free, brown bag "Lunch and Learn" forum on back care, Wednesday, July 21, 11-2:30 p.m. in the Rockridge Library. A panel of local back care experts will discuss:

- Different exercise options that prevent and relieve back pain.
- How physical therapy, acupuncture, acupressure, yoga, massage, pilates, and chiropractic therapies work separately and together.
- The ways traditional Western medicine approaches a healthy back.
- The benefits and risks of prescription and over-the-counter drugs.
- What to do in our daily lives to prevent and ease back pain.
- What to do to keep our backs strong and flexible.

Since this forum will be widely advertised throughout the Bay Area, RSVPs are encouraged.

For more information and to RSVP please contact Jan Christensen-Heller, marketing chair, RDA, 655.5952, or e-mail jch@christensenheller.com.

The Rockridge District Association is a 501c3 not-for-profit, community-based organization dedicated to enhancing Rockridge through public works and promotional and beautification initiatives within the business district.

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Breeding Vintage... Since 2003

The Neighborhood Merchant

by Theresa Nelson

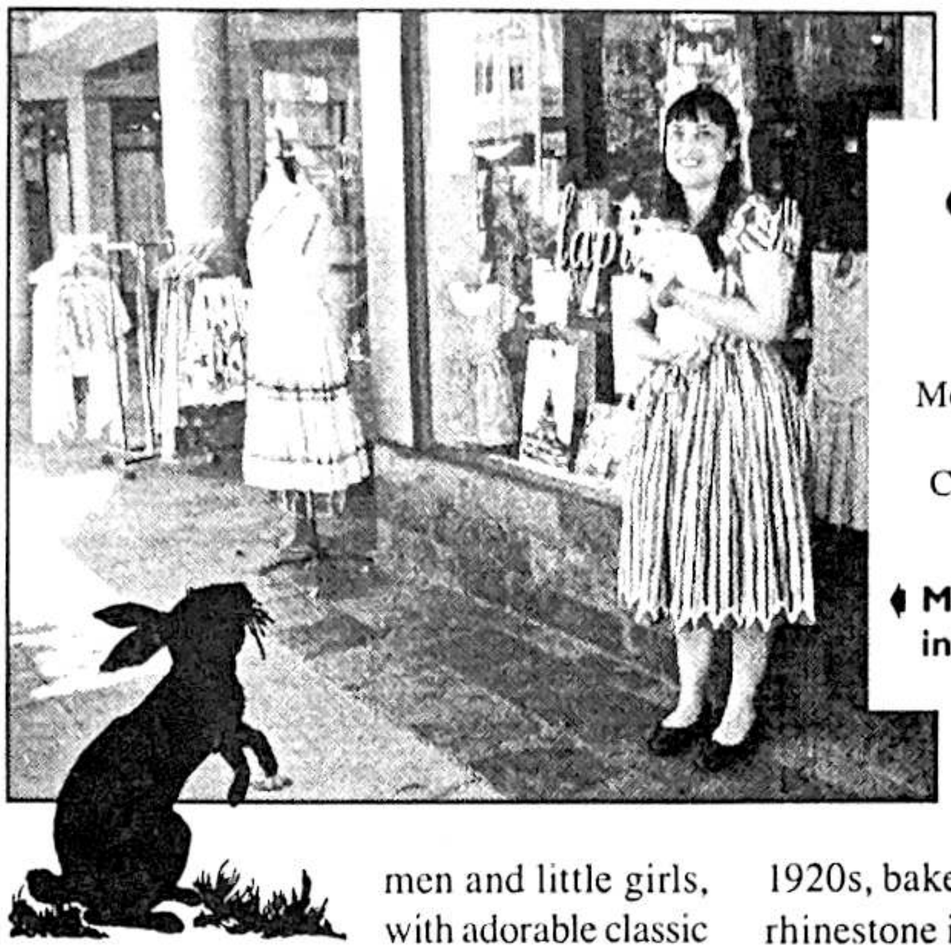


Photo: Don Kinkead

lapin

Owner: Maria Carranza

5337 College Avenue
Oakland 595-0724
Open 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
Closed Wednesday and Sunday



Maria Carranza and Owen in front of *lapin*.

Photo: Lydia Gans

The charming store *lapin* (French for rabbit) features vintage clothing and accessories and yes, an adorable spotted mini Rex rabbit named Owen. Nestled in a cozy shop near the Rockridge Library, *lapin* indulges your desire for well-made clothes from the past and unique items that have survived time.

Owner Maria Carranza and her husband have had house rabbits for seven years, and the name of the store was inspired by a vintage French anatomical poster which hangs behind the counter, an anniversary present (and not for sale). She opened *lapin* in September, 2003, to showcase her inventory of vintage clothing and accessories, which she had been selling wholesale to various stores (including Soirée) after closing her San Francisco store some years ago.

Inside *lapin*, rabbits abound. Rabbit greetings cards, rabbit doorstops, tiny rabbit figurines, large rabbit garden sculptures, rabbit pellet bags as wall art, rabbit pull toys with stuffed silk carrots, handmade large rabbit figurines in costume, vintage reproduction wallboard signs of rabbit families having parties and picnics... the array of rabbit-themed items is simply astonishing. If you or someone you know loves rabbits, then you must visit *lapin*.

Maria focuses on vintage clothing and accessories from the Victorian area through the 1960s, with some special focus on the Art Deco period. Most are for women in sizes 2-20, but she also carries items for men and little girls, with adorable classic dresses from the 1950s. She finds this one-of-a-kind clothing in many locations, but she also buys vintage clothing and invites Rockridge neighbors to bring in their vintage pieces to sell. If you have a lot of items, just call her and she will come to your home to check them out. The clothing ranges from very casual to extremely dressy and even includes a few costumes. She has a special corner devoted to little black dresses , with a wide array of styles and sizes to handle any dressy occasion.

Vintage shoes are also popular, from classic round-toed spectator pumps to sleek, beaded dancing shoes. Her vintage jewelry includes silver, black jet from the 1920s, bakelite earrings and bracelets, tiny rhinestone items, and even plastic bracelets with iridescent beetles inside them.

Lapin includes many gift items like black-and-white cards based on old engravings of animals (including rabbits), flowers and food, and actual flash cards of words from the '40s, simple and classic in their design. Maria carries old color postcards from Oakland and San Francisco, cartoon cards of the WACS, and even modest Victorian nudes. She has vintage dishware, bright yellow kitchen canisters, vintage swim caps from the '60s and roll garters from the '30s in their original packaging.

One of Maria's specialties is silk flower clips and pins offered under the "fleurette" label, her own designs. With every color in the rainbow and an array of flowers and butterflies, you can find a silk adornment to complement any outfit. Vintage handbags, scarves and coats can complete any look.

Maria enjoys College Avenue — "it's a great place for walking, with nicer weather than San Francisco and very friendly neighbors." She enjoys presenting a mix of vintage and vintage-inspired items to Rockridge, and invites neighbors to stop by, take a look and, of course, meet Owen.





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Letters to The Editor

The Rockridge News
5245 College Ave., PMB 311
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or e-mail:
editor@rockridge.org

The Rockridge News welcomes letters to the editor. Please limit to 200 words and include name, address and a phone number for verification. Only your name will appear with your letter. Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity.

Education coverage in *The Rockridge News*

Editor:

I commend *The Rockridge News* for its many stories on our local schools. As a newly-credentialed middle school teacher and the father of a six-month-old girl, I am keenly interested to see if the initiatives of Claremont Middle School's principal, Mr. David Chambliss, positively affect the decision of neighborhood families to send their children to Claremont. With improved outreach and involvement from the community, Claremont can copy the success that Peralta Elementary has had recently.

To neighborhood parents on the cusp of deciding between Claremont and a private school, I recommend basing your important decision on more than the current test scores and demographics of Claremont. Visit the school. Observe classes and lunchtime student interaction. Talk with teachers and administrators about the challenging, varied academic curriculum you want your child exposed to. Also consider that exposure to faces and races unlike your own is an important part of education as well.

I know firsthand that Claremont turns out good students. As a student teacher at Berkeley High School this spring, I was happy to discover that one of the best students in my algebra class went to Claremont Middle School last year.

Marc Acheson

Parking, not Archways

Editor:

Who needs arches to "define" the Rockridge shopping district? For those of us who live in the first block off College Avenue, "Rockridge" begins where parking ends! We don't need any more shoppers and diners until this neighborhood and its businesses deal with traffic and parking!

Claire Lomax

Local history at your feet

Editor:

No, this isn't a complaint about trees and the state of the sidewalks. I write instead about a minor and probably unnoticed part of Rockridge history. As I've walked along our streets, I've begun to notice the frequent builder's trademarks/tradenames stamped into the sidewalks. Many are dated and thus, I presume, are evidence of when a street was laid down or buildings erected. The earliest date I've seen is 1911, on Claremont by the Claremont Diner. Has anyone noticed an earlier one?

Norman Macleod MacleodEsq@aol.com

Pedestrians in Mortal Danger

Editor:

A Rockridge pedestrian could well be killed by a car or truck in the near future if parking laws are not enforced more strictly. I fear I could be the one killed. I use a motorized wheelchair.

I speak of the area in a six-block radius of Rockridge BART. Certain businesses allow their delivery trucks or customers to park on the sidewalk, in crosswalks, or block curb cuts. This illegal parking forces pedestrians to walk in the streets, outside rows of parked vehicles, in direct danger from oncoming traffic.

On residential streets, cars or trucks often park in a way that blocks sidewalks, forcing me and others with mobility impairments to travel in the street, in front of oncoming traffic. People complain of overzealous parking enforcement, but I often report these vehicles to Oakland parking enforcement, for it's a matter of life and death to me. A friend of mine was killed by a car while driving his wheelchair in the street because

Letters, page 11

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Letters from page 10

the sidewalk was impassable.

Rockridge people are highly educated. Yet many seem to have abysmal ignorance of the purpose of curb cuts, sometimes called curb ramps. These curb cuts are for wheelchairs, baby/child strollers, people using walkers or canes, luggage carts, bikes and those with ambulatory difficulties. The curb cuts at the intersection of College and Shafter are especially hazardous. They are narrow and steep-only one to a corner, forcing wheelchair users (and others) into the flow of traffic outside the crosswalk. And people waiting to cross in one direction often block wheelchairs crossing in another direction.

All too often groups of people stand in the curb cuts by Oliveto's or Cactus just to socialize, blocking access to pedestrians trying to finish crossing the street. At times like that, I have to shout: "Get out of the way!" I have no time for courtesy when cars are nipping at my heels.

Regrettably, I myself have bumped pedestrians or run over their toes. I apologize 99% of the time unless I'm racing to catch a bus or BART train. I'm sorry for all my disruptions of pedestrian movements. I slow down when I have more time, and often take alternative routes away from heavy pedestrian flow.

I hope this letter makes motorists, pedestrians and police aware of the lethal danger created by illegal parking and obstruction of curb cuts.

C. Tom Ross



by Ortrun Niesar

Rockridge Photography Exhibition: Call for Entries

Calling all photographers! The Annual Rockridge Photo Exhibition will take place during the month of October 2004 at the Rockridge Library. The exhibition is non-juried (but loosely edited) and open to photographers of all ages and levels of experience. Parent-child teams are very much encouraged. The subject is Rockridge, how we live, work and play. You must live, study or work in and around Rockridge to participate.

Look for flyers providing details at AG Photo on College Avenue and elsewhere. Applications must be received by September 1.

For more information, call Kate Runyan at 658-7833, or e-mail her at katerunyan@pacbell.net.

Ortrun Niesar can be reached at oniesar@aol.com. or 986-9560.

changes ON COLLEGE

by Theresa Nelson

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School Closings

from page 1

by another 1,500 students next year.

Along with Longfellow, State-appointed school district adminintrator Dr. Randall Ward closed four other elementary schools. Longfellow will become an expanded independent study program, which will co-exist with The Village Academy, an alternative middle school currently housed in West Oakland. Other sites will be transformed into a small new high school in East Oakland, an autism center, a residential 6-12 campus and a site dedicated to training staff and incubating future new schools.

Ward's heavy-handed, unilateral approach to closing schools made it difficult to have a thoughtful conversation about how we adapt and continue to thrive educationally in a declining enrollment era. Skyrocketing housing prices, charter schools and a long anticipated declining birth rate guarantee that the drop will continue — at least for now. How we plan for the use of our school sites over the next five years and how we treat the families affected by change are among the most important decisions we face as a city.

Our public school system funding is dependent on the number of students we serve. Seven thousand fewer students costs the $248M general fund budget approximately $35M annually. Ward's view is that paying large administrative overhead costs to maintain half-empty schoolhouses is wasteful, and ultimately hurts all students.

It is hard to argue the hard financial logic. But the school district is a human service organization which serves some of the poorest families in the state. Can we convince families to stay with the public school system if we continue to shuffle students around each year? In this era of per-pupil funding to each site, can we guarantee an adequate program to students at an under-enrolled school? Most important, how will all of this instability affect our current upward trend in student performance?

These issues are especially urgent in North Oakland because schools here have traditionally been small (average 350 students). Campuses below Broadway are struggling with declining enrollment because huge numbers of North Oakland families either transfer into higher performing district schools, choose private and charter schools, or leave the city for more affordable areas like Sacramento and Fresno. At a community meeting I hosted June 5, Ward said he does not want to close any more schools in North Oakland. But four schools (Emerson, Golden Gate, and Washington elementary schools and Carter Middle School) continue to be on a "watch list," he said, and may have to be consolidated in future years (not next year) if enrollment trends continue.

"Ward's staff and North Oakland principals are working with me to find creative solutions to keep schools open and stabilize enrollment.

"Oakland schools will prosper and serve well the needs of the community if parents and administrators collaborate to make creative decisions based on educational, social and financial considerations."

Ward's staff and North Oakland principals are working with me to find creative solutions to keep schools open and stabilize enrollment. Our early childhood education director is involved because hundreds of preschool students attend the affected schools. A series of community meetings are scheduled in June at Golden Gate, Washington and Emerson schools, and North Oakland parent leaders are personally inviting families to brainstorming sessions. We are surveying parents to measure interest in creating new Kindergarten-8th grade schools at Golden Gate and/or Washington to fill now-empty classrooms with middle school aged students who might make other choices. Creating new middle schools options in North Oakland modeled on the successes of the small schools movement is an option I fully support.

Conversations about sharing space to bring additional money to a campus are happening. New marketing approaches are being considered to spread the word about improved North Oakland school test scores.

Even in this downward enrollment cycle, there is no political will to sell or leave vacant any district property. Thousands of new housing units are either under construction or in the permitting process in Oakland — and neither the School Board nor Ward want to sell sites that may be needed in five years.

The facts are clear: Oakland schools will prosper and serve well the needs of the community if parents and administrators collaborate to make creative decisions based on educational, social and financial considerations.

Thank you for your continued support for Oakland public schools. Don't hesitate to call me with questions, concerns or to volunteer at 879-8653.

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Tree Ordinance

from page 7

- "Prior to the removal of any City-owned tree, except in cases of emergency or imminent hazard, City staff must document that they have evaluated alternatives to tree removal, including but not limed to the use of rubber sidewalks or other sidewalk materials such as decomposed granite, sidewalk grinding, sidewalk ramping, sidewalk meandering (including the possibility of an easement onto private property), curb relocation, utility relocation, and bulb-outs.
- Create a computerized tree inventory along with the sidewalk inventory.

For more information, contact Jane Brunner via e-mail at jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, or phone 748-1681.

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Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

È-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

No Saturday meeting in July. ANNUAL PICNIC: Sunday, July 11, 10am to 3pm. North Temescal Site at Temescal Regional Park. For August and September information: 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.

The Greater Rockridge N'hood Crime Prevention Council

Steering Committee meets 3rd Tuesday each month, 7 to 8:30pm. Fire Station #8 community room, 463 51st Street. Residents and business members of NCPCs 12Y and 13X areas are invited to voice their concerns about crime and public safety.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, (510)597-5017

FOR CHILDREN:

- Toddler Story Time: Saturday, 10:30am: 7/3, 7/10, 8/7, 8,14.
- Pre-School Story Hour: Wednesday, 10:30 & 11am: 7/7, 8/4, 8/18.
- Pajama Story Time: Tuesday, 7pm: 7/6, 7/20, 8/3, 8/17.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- **Go Wild With Books!** Sign up for Summer Reading Game until 8/14. Win prizes for reading. Game and events planned for ages 2 to 12, but younger and older children always welcome.
- **Mocha: Making Animal Masks.** Thursday, 7/8, 3:30pm. Kids of all ages, wear your work clothes for a hands-on workshop to make wild animal masks.
- **Folksongs by Adam Miller.** Tuesday, 7/13, 7pm. Sing along, clap or just listen. All ages welcome.
- **Music from Latin America by Colibri.** Tuesday, 7/27, 7pm. Bilingual songs in English and Spanish. All ages.
- **Fratello Marionette Show.** Tuesday, 8/10, 7pm. Performance of Peter and the Wolf to Prokofiev's Symphony with live narration.
- **The SPCA presents** three special Saturday workshops in August at 2pm. Sign up to attend one or more.

  8/7: Choosing a companion animal

  8/14: Being safe around animals

  8/21: Understanding animal feelings.

  Each workshop will include a game and craft, and a discussion about the topic. For kids ages 4 to 9, and their parents or caregivers.

FOR ADULTS:

- **Lawyers in the Library**: Free legal advice.

First Tuesday of each month, 6 to 8pm. Advance sign-up 5pm.

Library Hours: See box, top of page 2.

Rockridge Toastmasters

Every Tuesday, 7pm. Veteran's Building, 200 Grand Ave., Oakland. Improve public speaking skills in a friendly and supportive environment. For information: Mary, 531-8790 or e-mail info@rockridgetoastmasters.org

Writer's Support/Critique Group

Rockridge Branch Library, every 3rd Saturday, 1:30 to 5pm. ALL writers welcome. Bring 8 copies of up to 5 pages of your prose for on-site reading/discussion. Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch (www.berkeleywritersclub.org/). More information: 482-0265 or Writefox@aol.com

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings

5433 College Ave. All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Monday,7/12, 7:30pm. Amnesty International Monthly Meeting. All welcome.
- Tuesday, 7/13, 7:30pm. Book Group #3 will discuss **Ruth Ozeki**'s *My Year of Meats.*
- Tuesday, 7/20, 7:30pm. Book Group#1 will discuss **Maxine Hong Kingston**'s *Woman Warrior.*
- Wednesday 7/21, 7/30pm. **Stacey D'Erasmo**: *A Seahorse Year.*
- Sunday, 7/25, 2pm. **Alexander Cockburn** and **Jeffrey St.Clair**: *Serpents in the Garden: Liaisons with Culture and Sex.*
- Tuesday, 7/27, 7:30pm. **Richard Price**: *Samaritan.*

For more inf. about readings, book/discussion groups and classes: 653-9965 or www.dieselbookstore.com.

Backs In Rockridge

Rockridge Branch Library, Wednesday, 7/21, 11am to 2:30pm. FREE brown bag lunch-and-learn forum with Rockridge wellness providers discussing options for managing and preventing back pain. RSVPs encouraged. Beverages provided. Hosted by the Rockridge District Association (RDA). For more inf. and to RSVP, contact Jan Christensen-Heller, marketing chair, RDA, 655.5952, jch@christensenheller.com.

Cookbook Signings At Pasta Shop

Rockridge Market Hall, 5565 College Avenue (Shafter Avenue between College and Forest) 547.4005. Recipe and ingredient tastings, and demos.

- Friday, 7/16, 2pm to 5pm. **Oliver Said** of Cesar in Berkeley: *Recipes from a Tapas Bar.*
- Saturday, 8/21, 10am to Noon. **Marie Simmons**: *Fig Heaven: 70 Recipes for the World's Most Luscious Fruit.*

Friday Night On College: Acoustic Concert

College Ave. Presbyterian Church, 5955 College Ave. This new series of acoustic concerts is free and open to the public. Donations will be appreciated to benefit the Friday Night on College Community Meal.

- July 16, 7:30pm: singer and recording artist Christie McCarthy.

For information on upcoming concerts, call Kathy, 658-3665 or capc@inreach.com.

College Avenue Adult Center

College Ave. Presbyterian Church, 5955 College Ave. Every Wednesday, from 9:30am to 1:30pm. Light exercise, socializing, travel programs and music. Hot lunch available at noon for $2. For details about upcoming field trips and special programs, call Kathy at 531-6724.

North Oakland Senior Center

5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Center Hours: Mon–Fri, 8:45am to 4:45pm. Classes, workshops, educational/social events, walking groups and field trips. Also: Free health insurance counseling and health clinic.

- Sign up now for the community flea market Sat, September 25, 8am–4pm.
- Treasure Island tour/Culinary Academy lunch, Wed, August 25, 10am–3:45pm; register now.

The newsletter, "North Oakland Senior Times" provides a schedule of classes and a monthly lunch menu : (suggested donation: age 60+ $2; and $4 for those under age 60). Call 597-5085 for details and opportunities to become a volunteer.

Elder Care Support Group

Alta Bates Medical Center, Herrick Campus, 2001 Dwight Way, Berkeley. Free for family/friends caring for older adults. 3rd Wednesday each month, 4-5:30pm. For information on all support/education groups offered by Alta Bates/Sutter Health: call Monica at 869-4569 or e-mail Monicalcsw@alum.calberkeley.org.

Volunteers Needed

- **Alameda County Community Food Bank**. Assist in the warehouse or office; staff the Hunger Hotline. Hotline shifts Mon-Fri, 9am-12pm and 1-4pm. Call Volunteer Mgr. Mary Schoen: 834-FOOD(3663) or www.accfb.org.
- **Bambino Thrift Shop**: All Volunteer Shop benefiting Oakland Children's Hospital. 5290 College Ave. Volunteers needed Tuesdays through Saturdays. We will train you. Manager, Carol Maes: 654-9709.
- **North Oakland Community Charter School** (NOCCS): tutors to work with 1st to 4th graders on math skills, beginning reading and writing skills. Weekly time commitment of at least one hour. Located at College Ave. Presb. Church, (next to Dryers ice cream). Contact Jennifer Bloom, Director: 655-0540 or teachers@noccs.org.
- **Second Start Adult Literacy Program** of the Oakland Public Library. Volunteer tutors to meet regularly with adults learning to read. Some meeting at the Rockridge Branch Library. Free training. Nine month minimum commitment. Call 510-238-3432 or www.oaklandlibrary.org/services/SecondStart/index.html.

Locksley Avenue Block Party

Saturday, July 24, 2pm to 8pm. Locksley Ave. and Hudson St. All welcome to join your neighbors. Food, drink, the infamous Red Hound Pet Parade, karaoke contest and more. For details, contact Mike McDonald at mcdoak@yahoo.com or 510/772-7906.



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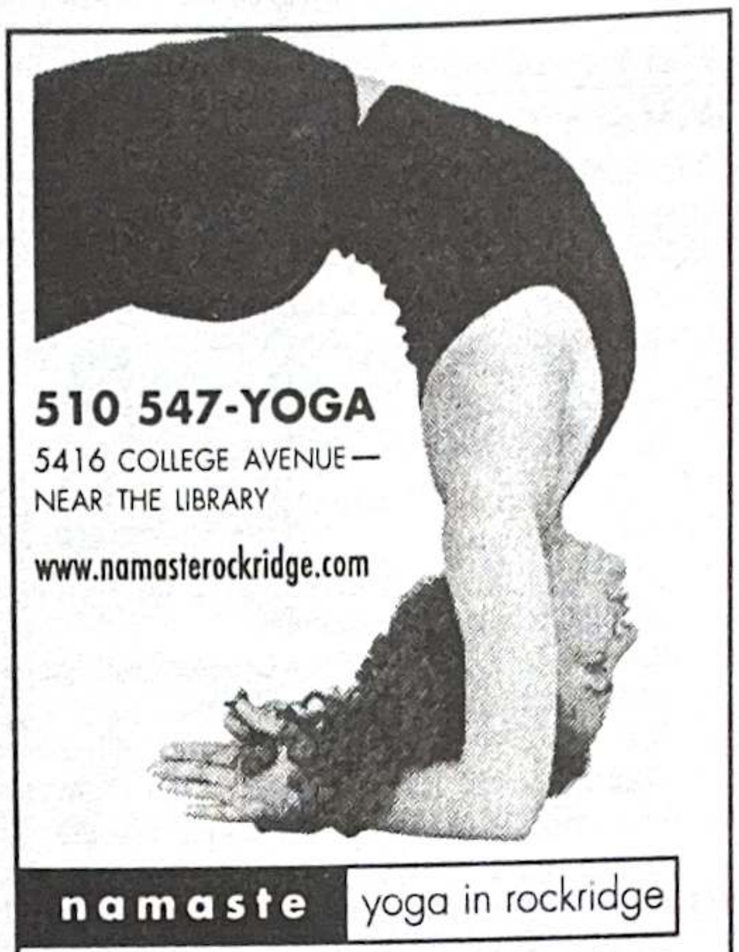
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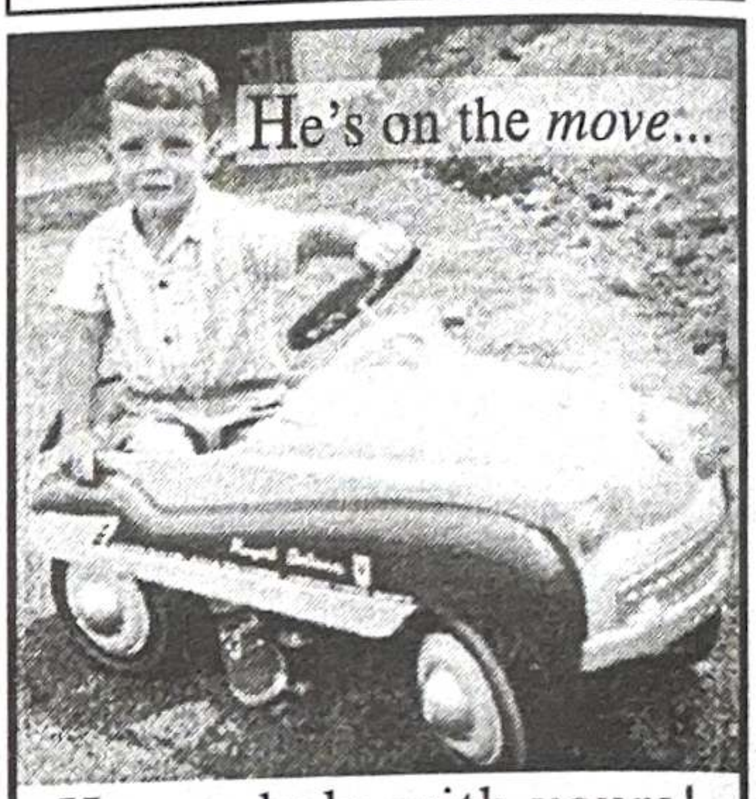
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