THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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CIRCULATION: 5,100 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

Sponsored by The Rockridge Community Planning Council • 5245 College Ave. PMB 311 • Oakland, CA 94618 • 644-4228

RCPC Seeks Board Candidates for April Elections



by Deborah Weinstein, RCPC Co-Chair

Are you interested in developing a community center in Rockridge? Improving community involvement in our public schools? Addressing traffic and parking problems? Increasing pedestrian safety? Improving our parks and open spaces? Well, Rockridge needs people like *you*. Serving on the Board of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) will enable *you* to work on these issues!

RCPC will hold its annual election in April for six Board Directors, each of whom serves a two-year term. The Board consists of 12 elected and two appointed directors. Candidates must be 18 years of age, reside within RCPC boundaries and indicate their intention to run for office by March 17. (A map and description of RCPC boundaries is available online at www.rockridge.org.)

Since 1986, RCPC, a 501(c)3 corporation, has been representing Rockridge to the City of Oakland on matters that affect the Rockridge community. RCPC acts as a community steward on a variety of issues. Description of RCPC's work in the community is available online at www.rockridge.org.

Candidates for the RCPC Board are invited to submit a photo and a 125-word statement describing their interest in running for the Board. Statements and photos must be received by March 17 for publication in the April issue of *The Rockridge News.*

▸ RCPC Election, page 3

agenda: RCPC Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, March 17, 7:30 pm.
Rockridge Branch Library
5366 College Avenue at Manila,
Community Room (Upstairs)

■ **Jane Brunner to Review City Budget at March 17 Town Hall Meeting.**

Where Should Your Tax Dollars Go?
by Jessica Pitt

In the coming months, the Oakland City Council and Mayor Brown will be finalizing the city's budget for 2005-2007. Like most municipalities, Oakland is facing a deficit that will require deep cuts in many city services and programs. The city council is going to have to make tough choices about which ones to save and which to eliminate.

Do you care about ensuring that Oakland has adequate public safety, trees, open space, well-maintained roads, programs for youth and seniors? If so, we urge you to attend the RCPC Town Hall meeting, Thursday, March 17, 7:30 p.m. in the Rockridge Library. Councilmember Jane Brunner will join us to provide an overview of the budget process, brief the community on what we are likely to see in the next budget, and hear from you about how you think the city should spend its money.

This is an important opportunity to provide input into the city budget process and make sure that the programs and services most important to you are preserved.

New Trees and Benches for College Avenue

by Daniel Ferdelman, Co-Chair, RCPC

Working together, City Councilmember Jane Brunner, Rockridge District Association (RDA) and RCPC have come up with a plan to beautify College Avenue.

The College Avenue Committee for Capital Improvements (CACCI, formerly the UnderBART Committee), chaired by Teresa Drenick and composed of representatives from RCPC, RDA and the community, has been studying improvements to the BART plaza for the past two years. The committee expanded its scope to evaluate improvements that will positively affect the entire length of College Avenue.

At a general meeting last summer, resi-

▸ New Trees and Benches for College, page 8



Typical evergreen flowering pear tree (*Pyrus kawakami*) planned for College Avenue.

Photo courtesy of Clifton's Flower and Garden Center, www.buyplantsonline.com

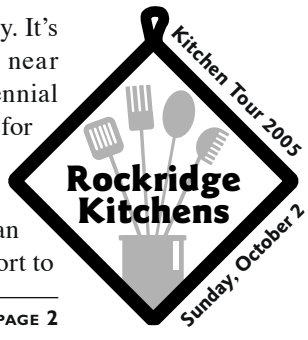
Rockridge's Kitchens Open Their Doors

by Jennifer Edmister

We're not sure how the word has traveled so far, but by all accounts, Rockridge has become one of the most desirable places to live in the East Bay. Nestled around lively College Avenue, our bustling locality is home to neighborly folk of every stripe and charming homes of equal variety. It's no wonder enthusiasts near and far flock to the biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour for a peek inside Rockridge's finest homes.

The Kitchen Tour began in 1995 as a fledgling effort to

▸ Kitchen Tour, page 2



Kitchen Tour

from page 1

raise operating funds for the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC). In 1997, home improvement experts took note, and three kitchens on the Tour were featured in *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine. By 1999, the event had grown to be wildly successful, attracting nearly 1,000 participants.

Today, the Kitchen Tour is an important fundraiser for RCPC, a non profit, public benefit organization. Tour proceeds enable RCPC to provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests and promote the quality of life in Rockridge. Among its many community serving functions, RCPC is a liaison between residents and the city planning commission. RCPC strives to be a voice for the community as College Avenue, our local schools and the neighborhood grow and evolve. Kitchen Tour proceeds also help support publication of *The Rockridge News* and donations to our local schools and parks.



☛ This 1997 Rockridge Kitchen Tour home kitchen features a work and snack island in the shape of a piano. At left is Chris Rossi, owner/chef of Citron, with home owner Dom Dimento.

While the Kitchen Tour supports a good cause, it's also just plain fun. Featuring home spaces large and small, classic and contemporary, the Kitchen Tour has inspired countless guests to renovate, remodel and redecorate their kitchens. Who can forget the grand Mediterranean estate in upper Rockridge, whose spectacular mahogany kitchen, with a piano-shaped island, blends seamlessly into a dreamlike garden? Or the Locksley kitchen where guests were greeted on the sidewalk by a full-sized cutout of a cheery toque-clad chef and ushered into a bright red kitchen splashed with those happy black and white California cows?

Whether you are in the midst of a complete renovation, or looking for inspiration, or merely a home enthusiast who wouldn't mind a stroll around the neighborhood on a warm fall afternoon, the Kitchen Tour has something for you. Join us on Sunday, October 2, as the tradition continues.

Kitchen Tour Selection: There's Still Time!

If you are a Rockridge resident ready to show off your refurbished, remodeled or renovated kitchen, please contact us. We would also like to hear from you if you would like to volunteer for one of our committees: flowers, food coordination, publicity or raffle. Contact Jennifer Edmister via e-mail at toejrb@earthlink.net or call 644-4228, attention Kitchen Tour.

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Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.
Sunday: **CLOSED**
Library program 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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Theresa Nelson ..... Neighborhood Merchant
Lydia Gans ..... Photography
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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:
Editor: editor@rockridge.org
www.rockridge.org
The Rockridge News, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618
RCPC Voicemail: 510/644-4228

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NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES
Publication date of the next issue is
☛ April 2, 2005
☛ April deadline is March 17.
Advertising rates are $22/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, 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.)

The Zoning Counter

The Zoning Counter provides Rockridge residents with an opportunity to review construction project proposals in their neighborhoods. It is a compilation of recent application(s) filed with the Oakland Planning Department, but not necessarily a complete or up-to-date listing. Individuals may contact the case planner or the Planning Department for additional information.

Many applications that require conditional use permits have 7- to 10-day public comment periods. For the most up-to-date information about applications on file at the city, go online. Here's how:

1) Go to the City's home page: www.oaklandnet.com
2) Select Department: Community Economic Development, scroll to Planning and Zoning
3) Hit "GO"
4) Click onto "Recent Applications to the City."

[No entries to post for this newsletter issue.]

RCPC Election

from page 1

Please include your address and phone number. Mail hard copies to RCPC, 5245 College Ave, PMB 311, Oakland, CA, 94618. Electronic copies can be sent to deborahlweinstein@yahoo.com.

Candidates will speak and voting take place at the April 21 RCPC Town Hall Meeting at the Rockridge Library, 7:30 p.m.

For further information, e-mail RCPC Co-Chair Deborah Weinstein at deborahlweinstein@yahoo.com.



RCPC Board Sets 2005 Priorities

by Jessica Pitt, RCPC Boardmember

At a strategic planning retreat on Saturday, January 29, the RCPC Board reviewed suggestions made by the community at a previous town hall meeting, heard reports from the chairs of RCPC committees and decided on the following priorities for 2005:

- **Information Portal.** In 2005, RCPC plans to devote significant time and resources to the redesign and expansion of the RCPC website (www.Rockridge.org). The goal is to provide Rockridge residents with a centralized portal for news, information and community resources. By creating a website that is accessible, informative, and easy to use, RCPC hopes to provide a valuable service and encourage greater community involvement in our neighborhood.
- **Neighborhood Planning Process.** RCPC's Land Use Committee will complete the Land Use Study begun last year. This will entail an extensive neighborhood planning process that includes surveys and focus groups with residents, merchants, and visitors, and use the information to update the 1994 Rockridge Area Plan and create a vision for future growth and development in Rockridge.
- **Targeted Development Opportunities.** RCPC plans to identify several commercial properties in Rockridge that are under-utilized or have the highest potential for improvements that meet C-31 zoning guidelines (ground floor retail and upper story office or residential use). RCPC will approach the owners of these sites about partnerships that would add to the vibrancy and efficiency of land use in the Rockridge neighborhood.
- **Support for Neighborhood Schools.** The Schools Committee plans to promote communication and volunteerism between Rockridge schools and the community. It will recruit parents to act as liaisons between RCPC and each neighborhood school, and will continue to provide financial assistance for special projects within the schools.
- **Capital Improvements on College Avenue.** RCPC will work with City Councilmember Jane Brunner's office to implement planned capital improvements along College Avenue, including new benches and street trees. The Capital Improvement Committee will also continue planning and pursue improvements in the area around the BART station, such as transit information displays, community kiosks and improved lighting and landscaping (see story, page 1).

In addition to these priorities, RCPC will continue to support ongoing projects and activities, including FROG Park, Friends of Rockridge Library, and Traffic and Pedestrian Safety.





Oakland Housing Authority Puts Community First

by Susan Montauk, Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council

Responding to complaints by neighbors about Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) properties, the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) invited OHA representatives to a Town Hall Meeting February 15. OHA Executive Director John Gresley, whose responsibility also extends to 12,000 Section 8-properties, told the 50 members of the audience to call OHA staff as soon as problems like strewn garbage, shouting, loud music, and needed repairs arise. But he also warned that with 254 scattered sites in Oakland and dwindling federal funding, the probability of speedy resolution appears dim.

The Rockridge area has five OHA housing projects, four of which are located north of Claremont Avenue; the fifth is located on the 5100 block of Shafter Avenue. Gresley said that annual federal funding, which supports municipal low-income capital improvements and maintenance, has been reduced from $11.3 million in 1993 to a projected $7.4 million in 2006.

OHA Property in Rockridge	
Address	**# units**
5120 Shafter Ave	7
368 62nd St	5
5805 Canning St	4
5825 Canning St	14
5914 Colby	6

All OHA buildings, except for replacement housing, were constructed between 1968 and 1972 and need attention. However, only buildings in greatest need of repair can be serviced each year. A few years ago, the 5825 Canning site was rebuilt after a fire in one unit forced closure of the building. OHA worked with neighbors to design a new building that fit with the surrounding area, and few problems have been reported since. Six sites were chosen to rehabilitate this year. According to its website (www.oakha.org), OHA processes approximately 51 requests per day for maintenance and improvements like new landscaping and painting.

Besides physical upkeep of its buildings, the OHA panel said the agency has a responsibility to its tenants, which it takes seriously. The OHA mission is to "assure the availability of quality housing for low-income persons, to promote the civic involvement and economic self-sufficiency of residents and to further the expansion of affordable housing within Oakland." Timothy Jones, Director of Housing Management, said that there is a thorough procedure in place for certifying new tenants and monitoring those already in place. Prospective residents are given a criminal background check. If accepted, they receive a three-hour orientation about their rights and responsibilities and each year must be recertified.



OHA Panel l to r: Executive Director John Gresley, Director of Housing Management Tim Jones, West District Manager J.W. Jackson, OHA Chief of Police Carel Duplessis. PHOTO: SUSAN MONTAUK

Since problems cannot be avoided, OHA must deal with residents' social issues and work to foster good relations with communities. Because of the small size of the scattered projects (often only six units per site), it is not economically feasible to install live-in managers. As a result, OHA relies on phoned-in complaints about property or clients' behavior and, according to Jones, prides itself on following up every complaint. The follow-up may take time; nevertheless, all calls are welcome. "We want you to call the OHA police department with complaints because this allows us to build a file," said OHA Police Chief Carel Duplessis.

With a force of 27 OHA officers and only five to eight of them on the street at any time, emergency calls take precedence. Drug dealing and violence are priority problems, but they often require collaboration with the Oakland Police Department. For a speedier response, neighbors should notify the OPD about problems like loitering and physical or verbal intimidation. With limited resources, OHA does the best it can, Gresley said. "We are trying to modify behavior, create a peaceful existence between neighbors and tenants, and refer tenants to social agencies as necessary to avoid an unhappy outcome. Eviction is the last resort."

In response to a question about trash being thrown over the OHA fence into a neighbor's yard at the Colby Street site, Gresley said that OHA held a recent meeting with neighbors and residents of all six units at the site, which initiated an ongoing process of communication. When another person raised the problem of offensive graffiti on OHA fences, Gresley promised to look into it.

Not everyone had a complaint about OHA properties. NCPC Chair Jeff Benroth read a petition signed by Shafter Avenue residents. "We are neighbors of the Oakland Housing Authority apartments at 5120 Shafter Avenue. While there [may] be some localized problems at some OHA locations, it is not the case here. It would be a mistake to generalize."

To lodge a complaint or offer a compliment about the physical condition of OHA property, use the three numbers below to call (in the order given). If you don't get satisfaction with the first number, try the next. Call the policing officer for complaints about behavior.

- **Acting Manager, Maintenance and Grounds**:
  Lily Brown, 874-1655
- **West District Manager**:
  J.W.E. Jackson, 874-1537
- **Director of Housing Management**:
  Tim Jones, 874-1520
  tjones@oakha.org
- **Policing Officer:**
  Corporal Jerry Williams, 535-3123

Update: Friends of Studio One

by Karen Hester

Oakland's Public Art Program seeks a qualified artist or team of artists to design, fabricate and install public art elements for the exterior entrance area of Temescal's Studio One Art Center. The commissioned public art project will celebrate the creative purpose of Studio One and will be integrated into the plaza, performance space and/or lawn areas of the front entrance.

Studio One classes will move to the Malonga Arts Center (formerly the Alice Arts Center) at 14th and Alice for the spring semester and for the next 18 months, as renovation begins at Studio One.

Friends of Studio One are beginning to raise the $400,000 needed for furnishings, kilns and computers in the new building. To help organize the campaign or to make a contribution, visit our website at www.friendsofstudioone.org or call Beth Maher at 510/420-5852.

Contact Karen Hester at 654-6346 or e-mail Karen@hesternet.net with questions or for further information.

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Creating a Vision for Rockridge: Making a New Neighborhood Plan

by RCPC Land Use Committee

Rockridge has changed a lot since the Grove-Shafter freeway (Highway 24) sliced through the heart of the neighborhood in the early 1970s. But rather than allow haphazard change, residents and merchant members of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) over the ensuing decades carefully planned growth and development. For a dynamic neighborhood like Rockridge, collaborative planning is essential and assures that future changes will continue to enhance the attractiveness and quality of life of the community.

How do you see your neighborhood in the coming years? Consider some of the following ideas:

- Could Claremont Middle School host a Rockridge community center?
- What about a Rockridge farmer's market?
- Or a redesigned BART station with real-time transit info at the ground level?
- Would one to three stories of housing above retail along College Avenue (our C-31 zoning ordinance allows, in principle, for 35 feet) ensure the viability of local serving businesses?
- Would additional housing on commercial corridors serve regional housing needs (the Association of Bay Area Governments predicts an increase of 1.4 million people in the Bay Area in the next 20 years)?
- Would a shuttle bus along College alleviate parking problems?
- Would you like to see more restaurants or fewer?
- Where could we create more open green space?

These are the kinds of questions the Land Use Committee will explore with the community as it updates the 1994 Rockridge Neighborhood Area Plan, which helped create the Rockridge library and FROG Park. At the RCPC Strategic Planning session last month, the Board approved $7,500 to initiate a neighborhood planning process that will seek input from residents and business owners about land use, open space, housing, schools, transportation, parking and other topics. This extensive project will take one to two years to complete and will need to raise additional funds.

In the past, much of the work of the Land Use Committee has been reactive, a response to changes and development along the commercial corridors. Its new goal is to develop proactive policies that enable members to plan ahead and choose the best ways to sustain and enhance the vibrancy of the neighborhood. The RCPC mission is ambitious: "to preserve and enhance the unique character of the Rockridge neighborhood; promote the health, safety and quality of life; furnish a forum for community involvement, and provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests." Within the context of this mission, the purpose of RCPC's Land Use Committee is "to advocate for, propose, and guide planning and development policies and projects towards a sustainable, vital commercial and residential neighborhood."

The 12 members of the Land Use Committee, six of whom are on the RCPC board, will host "discussion parties" (aka focus groups) as part of the neighborhood planning process. The committee, which meets every second Tuesday of the month, will launch "Making it Happen," a subcommittee that will outline the neighborhood planning initiative and the input process. We will keep you posted. Please contact us if you would like to help "Make It Happen" or if you have any questions, comments or suggestions: Hiroko Kurihara 510/384-0557 or h2oakland@sbcglobal.net

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Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

Tips for Food Lovers: Secrets and Shortcuts Cookbooks Never Tell You

How many times have I heard: "I can't even boil an egg," or "What does 'season to taste' really mean?" The key to good cooking is knowing experienced chefs' secrets and shortcuts. Every professional cook has a "bag of tricks" to make life easier in the kitchen. The most important thing I learned as a student at the California Culinary Academy is to keep it simple and never panic.

Let's start with boiling an egg. A perfectly hard-cooked egg is easy to peel and has a soft creamy center without a green ring around the yolk. One tip is to first bring eggs to room temperature by putting them in a bowl of hot water for about 20 minutes. In Europe, eggs are rarely refrigerated. Contrary to conventional wisdom, older eggs are preferable for hard boiling because they are easiest to peel. There are two schools of thought when it comes to preparing hard cooked eggs. To follow the French school, place the eggs in a deep saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring water to a rolling boil, remove from heat, cover the pan and let sit for 17 to 20 minutes. Next, for easy peeling, put the warm eggs in ice water for 20 minutes, then peel under a stream of cold water which helps separate the shell. Another approach is to put room temperature eggs in boiling water for exactly 10 minutes then transfer to a bowl of ice water. Either technique will produce perfectly cooked eggs.

Okay, lets go deeper into basics. Nearly every recipe ends with "season with salt and pepper to taste." Now what exactly does that mean? Bottom line, salt and pepper should be used to balance and enhance the intrinsic flavors of food, herbs and spices. My chef instructors always admonished: "Keep tasting throughout the recipe because you can always add more but can't subtract." When a recipe says, "season with salt and pepper to taste," always use kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, and add pinches of each and sample until you are satisfied. Make a note of the amount used.

The best restaurant tip: cooking frozen shrimp. Most shrimp we get in the Bay-area have been frozen. To bring back the flavor and freshness of the sea, brine the shrimp in a mixture of 2 tablespoons of kosher salt, 2 tablespoons of sugar and a quart of water for about ½ hour. For a more intense flavor, cook the shrimp with the shells on. After cooking, remove the shells with kitchen scissors. Although most cookbook recipes call for deveining shrimp, it is really not necessary. Most shrimp we get are farm raised; deveining is mainly for cosmetic purposes and not necessary for health or safety.

How easy this is!

Shrimp Boil

- ☐ 1 pound large shrimp in shells
- ☐ brine mixture – 2 tablespoons salt, 2 tablespoons sugar, quart of water
- ☐ 1½ quarts of water
- ☐ ¼ cup white wine
- ☐ 2 mashed garlic cloves
- ☐ 5 tablespoons Old Bay Seasoning
- ☐ ½ teaspoon peppercorns
- ☐ 1½ teaspoons salt
- ☐ ½ teaspoon cayenne
- ☐ 2-3 bay leaves, crumbled

Dipping Sauce

- ☐ ¼ pound unsalted butter
- ☐ 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- ☐ pinch of cayenne pepper
- ☐ 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Melt the butter and stir in the other ingredients

Instructions

1. Soak shrimp in brine mixture for 30 minutes
2. In a large pot, combine all other ingredients. Bring to a boil
3. Add shrimp to pot. Cover and bring back to a boil. Cook for 2-3 minutes. Drain
4. Serve with dipping sauce

Barry Kaufman is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy. His e-mail is kaufman42@earthlink.net . Barry is available for private cooking classes and fundraising events.

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How Chic Can You Be?

The Neighborhood Merchant
by Theresa Nelson



Photo: Don Kinkead



Featuring classic yet contemporary clothing for women and men, Chic is famous for its spectacular window displays which present a different theme each month.

Photo: Lydia Gans

Surrounded by a rainbow of new fashions in stunning classic designs, Chic owner Rana Mazandarani arranges today's new arrivals in her store with other fresh looks for spring. "Every day new items arrive," she says, while arranging a green knit top with a playful beaded purse and demure earrings.

Rana says that Chic is her baby; in fact the store is the culmination of an ambition she has been pursuing for 16 years. She holds a graduate degree in microbiology from U. C. Davis and was a team leader for a local bioscience firm for years, but always planned to open a store like Chic someday. While growing up, she helped her mother in the family fashion boutique in Iran. She moved to the US some years ago with her husband Behrouz, who grew up in Berkeley and worked as a physicist at the University of California. Together they designed and renovated Chic.

Chic's focus is classic yet contemporary clothing for women and men of 18-60+ years, ranging from daywear and professional attire to special occasion, including accessories. The elegant display racks show one of each item, with limited additional sizes in the back — Rana usually buys only three of each item so that clients will feel that their purchases are unique. She also special orders items.

"People in this area think differently. They recognize quality and want to know the details about their purchases," Rana says. She often collaborates with designers and manufacturers, focusing on the natural dyes and fabrics that her customers prefer. "When we work directly with the producers, we ensure that the funds go directly to the artisans rather than to middlemen."

Rana and Behrouz also travel together to New York, Italy and other fashion centers to find the special merchandise customers want. "Here clients touch the fabrics before they look at the price because they value quality and style," she says. And many items here are priced far less than one might expect, given the label and handmade designs.

This time of year, bridal dresses and styles for bridesmaids and mother-of-the-bride or groom are featured. One example is a gorgeously draped sheath in buttery satin with a curved neckline. Special occasion dresses also are arriving for the prom season in breathtaking choices. The "Audrey" dress is simply magnificent, an ecru linen sheath with hand-embroidered leaves in black on a thin silk top, cinched with a black belt. For daywear and professional wear, Chic carries fine knit separates from Maria Lisa and Nicole Miller and silk shirts and jackets from Komarov. The men's clothing includes gorgeous silk ties and supple sweaters from Armani and Versa, and shirts from Versace and Dolce & Gabbana.

Rana and Behrouz designed the store to have an international feeling, with touches like hand-painted floor tiles and naturally-posed mannequins. Since it opened a year ago, Chic has become famous for its spectacular windows. Once a month Rana works with designer Nina Taylor to design windows which are witty and beautiful. The current window is a tribute to film and the Oscars. Film reels unwind across the floor, with posters of "Rear Window" and a mannequin that resembles Grace Kelly. Inside the store, they showcase local artists, such as a photographer whose black-and-white photos perfectly complement the film theme.

Chic presents clothing that will make you feel fashionable without ever letting you become a fashion victim. Stop by and talk to Rana, and spend some time browsing and touching the exquisite fabrics as you discover the look best for you.



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5327 College Ave.	2/1	$699,000	$1,000,000	2/24/2005

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Friends of the Rockridge Library Has Openings for Board Members

by Marilyn Citron, Chair, FORL

If you love the library and want to make a difference, the Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) which operates under the umbrella of RPCPC, has vacancies for board positions beginning May 2005.

FORL's mission is to serve as an advocate for the library to the community, generate new ideas to enhance its facilities and programs, and encourage gifts and volunteers.

In 2004, our accomplishments were many, including funding a summer internship for an Oakland Technical High School student. FORL also provided a grant to the library to purchase a major reference work, the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB), and to buy magazine subscriptions and books not covered by the Oakland Public Library budget.

Our goals for 2005 include continued funding of the summer internship program, new landscaping treatments for all sides of the library and enhancing resources for the branch and its collections.

FORL board members invite you to join us. Please submit a brief description of yourself and your interest in serving to Marilyn Citron at mbcitron@yahoo.com.

New Trees and Benches for College Avenue

from page 1

dents selected five of CACCI's recommendations based on feasibility, cost effectiveness, and ability to be completed within a reasonable time frame. These were: Improved commuter plaza at BART; street trees; tree benches; improved benches and tables at BART; and multi-purpose kiosks. The CACCI group did additional outreach at the last Rockridge Kitchen Tour/Out-N-About in Rockridge; you may have seen our booth at Shafter and College.

We have identified at least 20 locations for new trees and 50 locations for tree benches.

Councilmember Jane Brunner's office has gotten the ball rolling with a commitment of $150,000 to plant trees and install tree benches along College Avenue. We have identified at least 20 locations for new trees and 50 locations for tree benches. The trees will add color and fragrance to the stretches of College Avenue that are hard and barren. The tree benches will look like the benches currently in front of Market Hall Annex. They will protect the trees and give shoppers and residents a place to rest on their strolls along the avenue. For me, the benches will be particularly helpful on walks with my daughter when I need to give her a bottle or adjust her position in the stroller.

We need your help to turn this vision into reality. We need local merchants and/or property owners on College Avenue to sign-up for a tree and/or tree bench. Signing up is easy: Forms are available from any of the people listed below. All it takes is a signature to request a tree or bench on the sidewalk in front of your property or business. For trees, you must also agree to water the tree for a year. After you sign up, the City will inspect each location to make sure that it's a safe place to put a tree or bench before installation.



Proposed tree bench for College Avenue.

PHOTO: DAN FERDELMAN

The CACCI committee and Jane Brunner's office will be contacting merchants and property owners on College Avenue in order to get everyone involved in this project. If you have questions or concerns please contact us.

Zachary Wald, Aide
Office of Vice Mayor
Jane Brunner
Phone: 238-7013
zwald@oaklandnet.com

Sara Wilson, President
Rockridge District
Association
president@rockridge
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North Oakland Community Charter School Fund Raiser

North Oakland Community Charter School's (NOCCS) fourth annual Silent Auction and Music Party will be held April 2, 6-11 p.m. at 525 4th Street in Oakland.

6-7 p.m. — Live acoustic soul and blues jamming

7-10 p.m.— Great deals on food and stuff from local businesses

10-11 p.m.— Live music from the nationally recognized band Placenta

Hope to see you there!

NOCCS is located at 5951 College Avenue. For more information, contact Allison Pugh, 510/435-9756, or e-mail pugh@socrates.Berkeley.EDU.

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Chabot Elementary's Spring Auction Helps Fund School Enrichment Programs

Anthony Chabot Elementary School's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) invites you to join us for our annual Spring Auction Saturday, April 2, 6-11 p.m. Our "Passport to Spain" fiesta will be held in the Pauley Ballroom located in U.C. Berkeley's Student Union building.

This is Chabot's biggest fundraiser; auction proceeds support school enrichment programs, including music, art, library resources, a computer program and a new on-site garden curriculum. The PTA also contributes to improvements of the physical plant. Since the City and state are cutting education spending, we rely more than ever on the local community. Contact Susie Poncelet to make a donation (an item to be auctioned, a gift certificate, or a cash contribution). Donors will be listed in our auction program and on our website at www.chabotelementary.org.

Tickets are $25 in advance and $30 at the door. To purchase tickets and for more information, contact Susie Poncelet, 510/985-1246, or email sponcelet@earthlink.net.

Anthony Chabot Elementary School Parent Teacher Association, 6686 Chabot Road, Oakland.

Claremont School Needs Volunteers

Are you an artist, musician, scientist, professional or someone with a story to share? Do you know someone who is? Claremont Middle School is always looking for speakers from the community. Contact Julie Harris: 652-2373 or julieharris@pacbell.net.

Landmark Kingfish Pub for Sale

The Pruitt family, long-time owners of the Kingfish Pub on Claremont Avenue, have decided to pursue other opportunities and are selling the Kingfish, adjacent residences and a billboard, all part of the property, to developers. The Pruitts hope the Kingfish can be incorporated into a new development. They chose local developers Ron Kriss and Roy Alper to buy the property because of their interest in having the Kingfish live on.

Kriss and Alper recently built the acclaimed Temescal Place Condominiums at 48th Street and Telegraph Avenue. They are eyeing the Kingfish site for a mixed-use development with retail and parking on the ground floor and 3 or 4 stories of condominiums above. They want to incorporate the Kingfish into the new development and move the two Victorian houses from the Telegraph side of the lot to another site in the area.

To share your ideas about this concept, Steve Pruitt, Kriss and Alper invite you to a meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 26, 2005, at the Kingfish Pub, 5229 Claremont Avenue. Ron Kriss can be reached at 510/547-5970 ext55 or ronkriss@jps.net.

Jeff Auen



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A Price Reduction in a Hot Market?
The Value of Negotiation Experience

2 BED/1 BATH "DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH": OAKLAND.
I have been working with a **Rockridge couple** recently. We re-discovered a home near Lincoln. We had seen this home earlier but the price and condition were unacceptable. By asking the *right questions* (of the seller and agent); *using careful negotiation strategies* and understanding the impact of inspection reports, we negotiated the price from **$475K** to **$419K** in a hot multiple offer market. **Lesson:** Realtor negotiation skills and experience can save *sellers and buyers* thousands of dollars.

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The Story of the Greening of Peralta Elementary School

"Eat Them! Eat Them! Here They Are." Peralta School Brings Green to Its Front Yard

by Christopher Waters, Project Coordinator

While Dr. Seuss's Sam-I-Am has not convinced Peralta Elementary School to eat green eggs and ham, the creature has inspired a passion for many things green, edible or not. Peralta — soon to celebrate its 125th anniversary — began testing its green thumb with the arrival of Principal Rosette Costello in 1996. She teamed with first grade teacher Calvert Hand and local resident Lauren Elder to beautify the front yard. With Hand's steaming-locomotive energy and gardening talent and Elder's training in theatre, museum installation and landscaping, the concept of a school garden bloomed. Railroad ties were laid in place to create large planter boxes; potted plants were imported and even a defunct tree, painted a Seuss-like blue, became a permanent art installation. Volunteers added colorfully painted handprints of Peralta students on tables, hoisted umbrellas and installed tree-stump stools. School art projects produced bird houses. Children began eating their lunches under the lush courtyard canopy and harvesting strawberries for dessert.



Parents and kids work together to maintain Peralta's extensive gardens.

PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER WATERS



Peralta students help build a garden from the ground up.

Inspired by the transformation of the school's front entrance and courtyard, Costello decided to redo the school's playground. With assistance from Councilmember Jane Brunner, the school district, the Alameda County Building Trades Unions, and the generosity of arts-and-environment-based grant foundations, Costello and her team transformed the schoolyard from an asphalt expanse to a park-like landscape, including an amphitheater. Under the tutelage of Elder and muralist Jamie Morgan, students added colorful, whimsical flourishes on walls and fences.

In this new garden, volunteers planted edible gardens in planter boxes. In the fall, students enjoyed their own pumpkin patch and harvested maize, squash and beans, the bounty from their lesson on Native American Culture.

Not content to rest, the school community took a deep breath and, in 2004, created the Alcatraz Avenue Vista. Teams of student and parent volunteers painted another mural and planted Japanese blueberry trees, hundreds of daffodil bulbs and an assortment of shrubs and vines.

Their work continues. Joined by ceramicist/

PERALTA GREENING PROJECT, PAGE 11

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Peralta Greening Project

from page 10



Following a day of study and garden work, students can play on challenging playground structures.

sculptor Gitty Duncan and textile artist Ellen Oppenheimer, Elder is now in classrooms working with children to create decorative hand-molded ceramic tiles for the amphitheater and design a flag to commemorate Peralta's 125th anniversary this year. Kid-designed benches, arbors and gates are being installed and the gardens have been designated "art-scapes," places where temporary and permanent work by the children will be on public display.

The garden committee has received grant funding to install a greenhouse for the North Street greening project, which entails replacing the chain link fence and concrete patio with a dry-stack brick wall and 30-foot trellis. The area will also house the Peralta Waste Reduction Center for the school-wide composting and recycling program. The greenhouse will provide space for science projects, but its main purpose is to create an organic indigo dye garden and a non-toxic fermentation vat to cultivate dyes for use in art projects.



Students add colorful, whimsical flourishes, including wood appliqué murals, large painted butterflies on a winding wooden fence, and fabric banners featuring the school motto.

Peralta is currently the only flatlands public school experiencing an increase in enrollment and an expanding waiting list. Principal Costello acknowledges that the single most important element of the school's success is the tireless commitment of its community of parents, educators, neighbors and friends. She also points out that sustaining that commitment requires constant inspiration and persistence like the Peralta Greening Project. To those who haven't yet bought into "green" programs, she urges following Sam-I-Am's advice about green ham and eggs: "You may like them. You will see. You may like them in a tree!"

Peralta Elementary Seeks Alumni

In preparation for Peralta's 125th Anniversary Spring Community Festival on May 14, 2005, the Peralta Parent Teacher Group is looking for former students, parents and teachers to share information about their experience at Peralta School.

Help us celebrate the long and rich history of Peralta's learning community: contact Susan Killebrew at 655-2737 or suchard2@earthlink.net for details.

The Rockridge News Needs Your Help

Volunteerism is good for the soul, and your community is the place to start. We know you love reading *The Rockridge News* but it doesn't reach you without a large volunteer effort. Sometimes we have to drop streets from our delivery network because no one comes forward to be a block captain. Please look at the list below and let us know what you can do to help out.

- A Marshal is needed to replace Robin Donovan. Duties comprise picking up the bundled newsletters in Rockridge the first weekend of each month and dropping them off at 5 nearby homes.
- Block Captains are needed to distribute the newsletter door-to-door for the following routes:

Route 16D: Both sides 5200 Claremont, including apartment at 5248

Route 14B: Both sides of Desmond between Coronado and 51st, and 51st from Broadway to Coronado.

- A volunteer is needed to prepare about 100 envelopes once a month for mailing *The Rockridge News.* We provide the labels and stamps.

Please call 547-3855 or e-mail Susan at smontauk@juno.com to volunteer.

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Local Residents Reject Airport Casino

by Cy Gulassa

Don't gamble on a casino in Oakland any time soon. Judging from the comments of panelists and most community members at Jane Brunner's February meeting at Peralta Elementary, the proposed casino near the Oakland International Airport would create monster traffic, pay mostly minimum wages, cost more in public services than it would generate in taxes, lure folks who can't afford to gamble, attract unsavory characters, siphon off 30 percent of profits to pay the Florida syndicates who would manage the operation, and frighten away endangered birds. Judging also from the broken promises of other casino owners, panelists warned that unless every honest-to-goodness, cross-my-heart promise to the community is chiseled into a granite contract, don't count on casinos fulfilling them.

The project, which would include an annual payment of $30 million to the City, consists of 2000 slots, four restaurants, a spa and 7-story hotel, and around-the-clock entertainment on a 35 acre site along San Leandro Bay adjacent to the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline Park. One of the main features of the MLK park is a restored wild life refuge that is home to the endangered Clapper Rail. Robert Cheasty, attorney for Citizens for an Eastshore Park, said the noise and night lights would attract predators and drive away the birds. The group will sue if plans for a Casino move forward.

Residents rejected the appeal of Daniel Beltran, Chairman of Lower Lake Rancheria Koi Nation, to help save the culture of the tribe by supporting a Nevada-style casino in Oakland. "It's in harms way," he said.

"Claiming the casino will save your culture and history is truly bogus," Valerie Winemiller responded. Zee Miller urged the tribe to build a museum if the goal is to preserve the Koi culture.

The issue is not the welfare of Indian tribes or gambling on reservations, Oakland Councilmember Jane Brunner said. "It's whether or not we want to support the spread of urban gambling." In addition to San Pablo's existing casino and the proposed one in Oakland, two more are planned for Point Molate and North Richmond.

Despite fierce opposition, the tribe's proposal for an Oakland casino ultimately depends on the decision of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. If approved at the federal level, the details of the proposal would be negotiated privately with the Governor and voted up or down (no alterations permitted) by state legislators. Once established, the land has the status of a sovereign nation, immune to local and state laws.

Cultural Notes: "CASINO," the Play

by Claire Wahrhaftig-Isaacs

If the last time you tried to testify at City Hall and were limited to the one minute rule, you will love "Casino," featuring the song, "Only a Minute". This musical spoof of Oakland's politics is a must-see for local city politics wonks.

"Casino" is a musical satire with characters like Mayor JB, who converses in Latin while assuming yoga poses. "Jac Az", balding and weird, has the hots for Lupe, young assistant to dedicated Councilwoman Nancy Tenacity. Lupe falls for half-Indian website tech designer, Sam Sam Miguel, last of his tribe, who is pursued by developer Ace Trumps to front an Indian gambling casino in the Fox Oakland. Appalled preservationists get the runaround from Planning, Redevelopment, and even the Information Desk. Sound familiar?

Beyond the laughs, the scripts aks questions such as, "What price to obtain jobs for a broke municipality?" It would be great presented in a theatrical venue with a small orchestra and chorus, but the cast of 12 and two musicians do a great job. With book and music by the very talented Judith Offer and Joyce Whitelaw, this hugely entertaining show is at the YWCA at 1515 Webster Street at $20 per person. It opened in 2004 and was updated for this second run, through March 12. Call 444-8521. Today!

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Rockridge Peralta Elementary Artwork on Display

by Christopher Waters

A series of brightly colored, hand-made quilts line the walls of the Nomad Café Gallery this March, all selected from a group of portrait quilts made by Peralta Elementary school children. Under the tutelage of textile artist Ellen Oppenheimer, the students created this unique installation with support from a City of Oakland Art in the Schools grant.

The self-portraits in the quilts display the whimsy and joy of childhood. The students began by creating designs on paper, then dyed white fabric to create expressive self-images and helped sew them together. The quilts were then bound by the New Pieces Quilt Store and Gallery in Berkeley.

Ellen Oppenheimer has been working with Peralta since 1998 when her son enrolled in the Rockridge school. Last year she and her students created designs for installation in the United States Embassy in Moscow, which remain on display.

Oppenheimer has taught and worked with thousands of students of all ages. Her work is well-represented in both museum and private collections, and she was recently honored by the International Quilt Association by having her work included in *The Twentieth Century's Best American Quilts*, a book that explores the evolution of quilting from the first traditional quilts to the avant-garde.



Photo: Christopher Waters

Oppenheimer is collaborating with the Peralta Elementary community to create an organic indigo dye garden on the school campus (see story, page 10), which will allow students the opportunity to grow, cultivate and ferment their own dyes for art projects. For more information about Peralta, visit http://www.geocities.com/peraltaschool/.

Peralta quilt images are available online at http://www.gypsyspiritmission.com/events/peralta_quilts/

The Nomad Café invites you to meet the artist and her students and to view their work in the Nomad Café Gallery on Sunday, March 6, 2005, 2-4 p.m., 6500 Shattuck Avenue (corner of 65th Street), Oakland (open M-F 7 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sat. 7 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sun. 8 a.m.-7 p.m.).

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More RN Classifieds, page 11, bottom right.


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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.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Compiled by Jo Ellis

Councilmember Brunner's Community Advisory Meeting

First Saturday every other month, 10am to noon. No March meeting. April meeting topic: The Budget. The Mayor and City Administrator scheduled to attend. NOTE: A special meeting concerning St. Albert's Priory on Birch Court will be scheduled for March. Mtg location:Peralta Elementary School: 460 63rd St. (parking on Alcatraz Ave., just east of Telegraph). For more information on this or other issues, call 238-7001 or www.oaklandnet.com (the site for all City-related information).

The Greater Rockridge N'hood Crime Prevention Council

Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas are invited to voice their concerns about crime and public safety. Steering Committee meets 3rd Tuesday each month, 7 to 8:30 pm, Temescal Library, 5205 Telegraph Ave.

Rockridge Branch Library

For Children:

- Toddler Story Time: 1st and 2nd Saturdays, 10:30am: 3/5, 3/12, 4/2.
- Pre-School Story Time: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays,10:30am: 3/16, 4/6.
- Pajama Story Time: 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7pm: 3/8, 3/22.

For Adults:

- **Lawyers in the Library**: Free legal advice. First Tuesday of each month: 6 to 8pm. Advance sign-up starts 5pm.
- **Hanna Somatic Education** with Abby Rose: six consecutive Monday evenings, starting March 7 through April 11, from 6:30 to 7:45pm. FREE series of workshops teaching the Hanna Somatic Program for relief of chronic pain. Class content builds from week to week, but you may start anytime. Wear loose clothing and bring a mat. Participants must be able to lie on the floor. Call Linda at 597-5017 for more information.
- **Free Writer's Workshop:** "Self-Editing and Working with an Editor," led by professional editors Laura Kennedy and Ken Sanderson. Saturday, March 19, 2 - 3:30pm. Call Linda, 597-5017 to reserve a spot.
- **Tax Information**: Rockridge Branch Library has state and federal tax forms available. Five Oakland Branch Libraries offer free tax assistance: the Main Library, Chavez, Dimond, Melrose, and Temescal. **NOTE:** Rockridge Branch does NOT offer tax assistance.

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017
Library Hours:
Monday and Tuesday, 12:30 to 8pm
Weds, Thurs and Sat, 10am to 5:30pm
Friday, 12 to 5:30pm **Closed: Sundays**.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Monday, 3/14, 7:30pm. Amnesty International monthly meeting. All welcome. 5433 College Ave. For readings, book/discussion groups and classes: 653-9965 or www.dieselbookstore.com.

Chabot Elementary School Annual Spring Auction

Saturday, April 2, 6 to 11pm, in the Pauley Ballroom of the U.C. Berkeley Student Union building. Proceeds from the **"Passport to Spain Fiesta"** support school programs and physical plant improvements. Sponsored by the Chabot Elementary School PTA. Tickets are $25 in advance, $30 at the door. Contact Susie Poncelet, 985-1246 or sponcelet@earthlink.net.

North Oakland Community Charter School

Fund Raiser: April 2, 6 to 11pm, 525 4th Street, Oakland. Fourth Annual silent auction and music party. For more information: Allison Pugh, 435-9756 or pugh@socrates.Berkeley.EDU.

Writers Support/Critique Group

ALL writers welcome. Bring 8 copies of 5 pages of your prose for on-site reading/discussion. Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch (www.berkeleywritersclub.org/). Rockridge Branch Library, March 19 (3rd Saturday), 1:30 - 5pm. For more information: 482-0265 or Writefox@aol.com.

Activities, Events for Seniors

- **College Avenue Adult Center**

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

- **North Oakland Multi-Purpose Senior Center**

*__Free help with taxes__ until 4/12. Call for appt.

*__March deadline to register for trips__ to Monterey on 4/21, and the Asparagus Festival in Stockton on 4/23.

The Newsletter, "North Oakland Senior Times" provides a full schedule of classes as well as a monthly menu for lunch: (suggested donation: seniors age 60 + $2.25; $4 for those under age 60). Location: 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Center Hours: Mon – Fri, 8:45am to 4:45pm. Call 597- 5085 for details about membership, newsletter, classes/events and opportunities to become a volunteer.

Elder Care Support Group

Free for family/friends caring for older adults. Third Wednesday of each month, 4 -5:30pm. Alta Bates Medical Center, Herrick Campus, 2001 Dwight Way, Berkeley. 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

- **Bambino Thrift Shop**

All Volunteer Shop benefiting Oakland Children's Hospital. Volunteers needed Tuesdays through Saturdays. We will train you. Call manager, Carol Maes: 654-9709. Location: 5290 College Ave.

- **North Oakland Community Charter School (NOCCS)**

Tutors to work with 1st to 5th graders, one-on-one or in small groups, on math, reading and writing skills; time commitment of at least one hour per week. Located at 410 Alcatraz Ave. (cross St. Colby). Contact Julia Kassissieh, Director: 655-0540 or director@noccs.org.

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Terry Kulka
- **Taking the Confusion out of Purchasing a Home**
  Saturday, April 9 9:30 to 1:00
- **Everything you wanted to know about Selling Your Home:**
  Saturday, April 16 9:30 to 1:00

For more detailed information on these classes, go to www.piedmontadultschool.org or call 594-2717. Terry has been teaching these classes at Piedmont Adult School for over 15 years.

Terry Kulka 510/339-4789
terrykulka@att.net
http://www.terrykulka.com
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