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

Home & Kitchen Renovation Forum Set: September 15

Do all remodeling roads lead to the kitchen? Ask the experts at the RCPC September Meeting

by Jennifer Edmister

As the October 2 Rockridge Kitchen Tour approaches, many home enthusiasts allow their minds to wonder: "What is really involved in a kitchen remodel?" "How realistic is my budget?" "What can I do myself?" "Shall I add a second story while I'm at it?" Conveniently, we have invited a host of renowned local professionals to answer these questions, and many more. Join us Thursday, September 15 at 7:30 pm for our home and kitchen renovation forum.

Among our featured guests is Kathryn Rogers, owner and founder of Sogno Design Group. Kathy, who approaches her work as art, has been designing kitchens in Rockridge and throughout the East Bay for over 15 years. Kathy will share with us her observations about exciting new trends in home design, as well as offer some perspectives on what makes a kitchen timeless, classic and functional in any home. Learn about new materials that are quickly

▸ Renovation Forum, page 10

agenda: RCPC Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, September 15, 7:30 pm., Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Avenue at Manila, Community Room

- **Kitchen Renovation Forum:** A renovation slide show and talk with Kathryn Rogers, Sogno Design Group, builder Tom Lawrence and developer Mike McDonald. Details in story above.



Jan Louden renovated her classic Craftsman kitchen on her own. Her exquisite work, including her handcrafted beadboard cabinets, are featured on this year's Rockridge Kitchen Tour. Photo: Ken Rice

Join Us for the October 2 Rockridge Kitchen Tour

Buy your tickets in advance and save!

by Jennifer Edmister

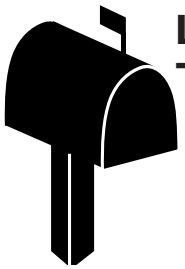
The Rockridge Kitchen Tour is upon us. After careful consideration of a record number of outstanding kitchens, our committee has selected nine of the finest home kitchens in Rockridge for the sixth biennial kitchen tour. Our kitchens reflect a variety of architectural styles as well as budgets from modest to elaborate. This year, we are particularly proud to present two kitchens — one Craftsman and one contemporary — that were

▸ Kitchen Tour, page 10

Over 300 Rockridge neighbors held a candlelight vigil at the Rockridge BART station on the evening of August 17. It was one of many such demonstrations that occurred simultaneously all over the country in support of Cindy Sheehan, whose son was killed in Iraq. Sheehan has been camping near President George Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas, asking that the president meet with her to explain what the "noble cause" is that her son had to die for. Her vigil touched the hearts of many people who are increasingly questioning the President's rationale and conduct of the war.

Photo and text by Lydia Gans





Letters to The Editor

The Rockridge News
5245 College Ave., PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618
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.*

Please, No Fruitvale-Style, High-Density "Transit Village" in Rockridge!

Editor:

Three decades ago, the latest and greatest trend was shopping malls, and thousands large and small were built in just about every community. Many of these shopping malls were successful. Some were initially successful, only to find later that they did not fit the character or economics of the community, which caused many of them in the Bay Area to fail.

The latest and greatest planning idea to reach communities these days is the transit village. The concept is based on an intermodal facility where trains, buses, taxi and parking are intermixed to allow access to and from all points within the Bay Area. This intermodal facility is expanded with high-density housing, commercial business, schools, day care and/or senior centers. The most recent example of this development is in the Fruitvale neighborhood.

The Fruitvale Transit Village is new and has great potential, as the community was already fairly dense and somewhat economically depressed. Thus, the development of shops, businesses, and senior and child centers within a transportation center seems to have provided focus and direction for local economics and community interest.

But where did the transit village idea originate? Rockridge is the original transit village. The idea of business, school, church, library, restaurant, super mart and shopping all within easy walking distance of transit and home is the essence of a transit village. The blend of single and multi-family homes with apartments, shops, community and business centers is what has made Rockridge grow into a thriving, vibrant community, recognized as one of the finest neighborhoods in the Bay Area. That didn't happen by accident.

In the '60s, Rockridge was devastated by the construction of the Grove Shafter Freeway (Highway 24) which destroyed hundreds of fine craftsman homes, but the community regrouped and came together to oppose further demolition of homes by developers and to push for reasonable growth and development. It resisted outsized projects like high density towers around the BART station, a three-story parking lot under the freeway and expansion of the Dreyers factory as entirely inappropriate for Rockridge. Instead, it pulled together as a community to build cultural amenities like the library, a Greenbelt, Frog Park, and even a park for dog lovers, and it crafted a development plan that to this day assures all of us and our children a walkable, sustainable neighborhood.

The idea of RCPC leaders wanting to bring to Rockridge a Fruitvale-style transit village (as reported on the front page of the *East Bay Daily News*, June 7) is simply ridiculous, as the density, economics and community are completely different. The idea of tearing down beautiful Arts & Crafts bungalow homes and shops to construct a high-density transit village development around BART is as crazy as the idea of big box stores and a strip mall in the neighborhood, to say nothing about parking congestion and traffic.

I caution my friends and neighbors to be observant, and to respond quickly and negatively to the suggestion of increased density and the development of a Rockridge "transit village." Rockridge is already a nationally acclaimed transit village.

— Barney Smits

Correction:

We welcome opinions and encourage dialogue on this issue; however, for the record we would like to clarify that the RCPC has never suggested that homes in Rockridge be torn down nor is the RCPC proposing a Fruitvale-style transit village in Rockridge. As the author states, "…the community came together to oppose further demolition of homes". That community eventually organized as the RCPC and incorporated in 1985. Today, the RCPC simply advocates for full density as permitted by the designated C-31 zoning which allows for three story buildings not to exceed 35 feet on College Avenue. We promote adding stories to smaller buildings (not to

Letters, continued page 8

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Mon, Tues: 12:30 – 8 p.m.
Weds, Thurs, Sat: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
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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Publication date of the next issue is
☛ **October 1, 2005**
☛ **October deadline is September 15.**

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

The Zoning Counter

5950 Margarido Drive

Proposal: To construct a new approximately 4,023 sq. ft. single-family residence on a vacant lot.

Applicant: Ike and Ivy Eze

Contact Person/Phone Number: Ike Eze 510/893-0233

Owner: Ike and Ivy Eze

Planning Permits Required: Residential Design Review per Chapter 17.136 to construct a new single-family residence, and a Minor Variance per Chapter 17.148 to locate the structures 46' from the rear lot line whereas 50' is required (for lots exceeding 100' depth, the required rear yard setback is 20' plus 1/2 foot for each foot of lot depth beyond 100').

Case Planner: Ann Clevenger at 238-6980 or aclevenger@oaklandnet.com.

5431 Claremont Ave.

Proposal: To convert an existing basement to a second unit at an existing single-family residence, replace existing rear stairs and add a new deck at the rear.

Applicant: Niccolo DeLuca

Contact Person/Phone Number: Niccolo DeLuca 510/774-9840

Owner: Niccolo DeLuca

Planning Permits Required: Residential Design Review per Section 17.136 to convert an existing basement into a second dwelling unit at an existing single-family resdience, and Minor Variances to: (a) locate the required living room window 3'8" from the side lot line, whereas per Section 17.108.080, the minimum side yard opposite legally required living room windows on properties containing 2 or more residential units is 8 feet, and (b), to provide the new second required parking space as a tandem space, whereas non-tandem parking is required.

Case Planner: Ann Clevenger at 238-6980 or aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

RCPC Appeals Permit for Ground Floor Real Estate Office on College

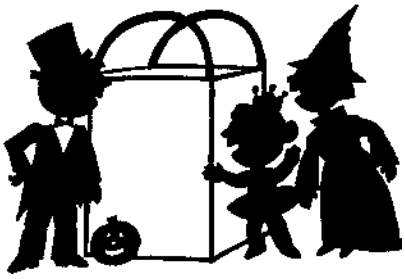
by Jessica Pitt

The June issue of *The Rockridge News* reported on the purchase of 5327 College Avenue by Maison Nouveau, a real estate company which plans to locate their offices on the ground floor of the building. RCPC has opposed the issuance of a minor conditional use permit to Maison Nouveau because a real estate office does not conform to the C-31 zoning guidelines on College Avenue. C-31 requires retail on the ground floor with an allowance for offices and housing on upper floors.

Rockridge residents fought hard for C-31 zoning because the community recognized that the economic vitality of the College Avenue commercial area depends upon a vibrant retail environment. RCPC is not opposed to having a real estate office on College Avenue, but it should not be located on the ground floor. RCPC prefers to have a retail establishment that would attract more shoppers to the business district than a real estate office is likely to, and generate foot traffic that would, in turn, support surrounding businesses.

In late July, RCPC learned that the City had approved the minor conditional use permit for Maison Nouveau despite RCPC opposition. RCPC has appealed this decision and will present its case before the planning commission on Wednesday, September 21, at 6:30pm.

RCPC needs as many voices as possible at the planning commission meeting. Please contact RCPC via email at RCPCOakland@comcast.net if you are able to attend.



Halloween Parade Volunteers Needed

The Annual Rockridge Hallowe'en Parade needs a few more moms and dads on its committee to help organize and plan the event. A large contingent of witches, gremlins, ghosts, pirates and wizards are expected to march on College Avenue in October to receive tributes from our merchants.

Contact Grand Wizard Deborah Weinstein for more information: 510/595-3352 deborahlweinstein@yahoo.com.

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Rockridge Annual Street Fair

Out & About: Exploring Rockridge and Market Hall's Picnic in the Street

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Noon – 5 PM

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How Do You See Rockridge in Two to 20 Years?

by: Hiroko Kurihara, Chair, RCPC Land Use Committee

Many say Rockridge is one of the best places in the world. How we define that is what makes the difference in who we are, what we believe in, and what we hope for. How we sustain and enhance our neighborhood is the mission of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC). All residents in Rockridge are members of the RCPC and our collective voice is important. The Board of Directors decided, in our last strategic planning session, that we would go to the community to hear from as many people as possible. In the coming months, the RCPC Land Use Committee will be holding informal discussions throughout the neighborhood in people's homes and other community venues to begin conversations and hear your suggestions for the coming years in Rockridge.

Recently, fears have been expressed that there may be hidden agendas of developing multi-story buildings along College Avenue. However, there is no RCPC policy that is promoting high-density development in the commercial area. In 1974, the Rockridge community and the RCPC fought to establish the C-31 zoning designation for College Avenue, which encourages mixed-use development with retail below and housing and offices above with a height limit of 35 feet. The current RCPC Land Use Committee has been advocating enforcement of the C-31rules and will be going to the planning commission on September 21 to appeal the city's decision to permit non-retail activity on the ground floor at 5327 College Avenue.

Twelve years ago, RCPC, together with the city, completed a 1994 Rockridge Area Plan (RAP). Two years ago, the land use committee began to revisit the plan and asked, "Where have we come since then and where are we going?" We conducted an inventory of land use along College Avenue to get a sense of how the business patterns were changing. We found that increased rents were driving local commercial services out of business. We also found that there was a steep increase in restaurants — which is great, but restaurants primarily serve a wider region. There is also more than our fair share of mental health providers. A transportation survey claims that 50% of Rockridge residents drive to College Avenue.

Other relevant questions include: How can we work with BART to improve the plaza when the seismic retrofitting starts? Do we need more green open space or bike- and pedestrian-friendly travel? How could we work together to create a community center? Or implement a farmer's market? For example, in 1994 the Rockridge Area Plan (RAP) suggested the Rockridge library and the FROG Park as projects for implementation.

Please contact us and participate in discussing your perceptions of Rockridge and your vision for creating positive changes in the quality of life in our community. Check www.Rockridge.org for the dates and locations of groups happening in your neighborhood starting September 22.

For more information, contact Hiroko Kurihara at 510/384-0557 or h2oakland@sbcglobal.net

Become a Head-Start Storyreader

Rockridge Librarian Gay Ducey offers story reading workshop

Want to pick up great story-reading skills and encourage a new generation of readers in Oakland? Volunteer storyreaders present weekly storytimes to preschoolers at one of Oakland's Head Start centers or affiliated Child Development Centers, introducing children to the pleasure of stories and inspiring excitement about reading books.



Gay Ducey FILE PHOTO

Beginning Tuesday, September 13 at the Rockridge Branch Library, participants will learn the art of story reading from a true professional, Gay Ducey, whose storytelling talents have been featured on The Mister Rogers' Show. Call 238-7453 to reserve a spot. Space will be limited again this year so call today!

All training takes place at the Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Ave. Bilingual volunteers are needed, especially in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Spanish. For more information, call 238-7453.

Instructor Gay Ducey is the Children's Librarian at the Rockridge branch. She is a professor of storytelling at Dominican College, Santa Rosa College, University of California at Berkeley Extension, and the UC Berkeley Library School. She is the former co-chair of the National Storytelling Association, and co-founder/director of the Bay Area Storytelling Festival.

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Star-Studded Parade of Cops in "Lineup" at NCPC Town Hall Meeting

Crime is down in North Oakland, they tell residents

by Janet Somers

On a balmy evening in July, about 80 fans of crime prevention turned out for the Greater-Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)'s Town Hall Meeting, held, as it always is twice each year, upstairs in the Rockridge Library.

It was a star-studded lineup. The Oakland Police Department's newly-minted Chief Wayne Tucker was there, and North Oakland's Lt. Lawrence Green, who dispatches his duties with eminent enthusiasm — he was at one point criticized for being *too* open with the public, NCPC Chair Susan Montauk told the audience — also put in an appearance.

After Montauk ran down a list of recent NCPC activities, including the placement of wily crime-prevention flyers that look "just like parking tickets" on car windshields at BART, and conducted some brief NCPC business, she introduced Chief Tucker, who was looking urbane in a suit and tie.

Tucker, 62, retired from the Alameda Country sheriff's office in January after 40 years of service. He became interim OPD chief on February 1 and (subsequent to the meeting) permanent chief on August 8. Lt. Green said in a later interview, "I wouldn't have believed that somebody could have such a great impact in such a short time. It's like he stepped in front of an aircraft carrier and just said, 'Move!'"

Of his abbreviated retirement, Tucker told the crowd: "I'm one of those persons who didn't really intend to suddenly do nothing. The mayor asked me to do this job and it took me about a microsecond to say yes. I grew up in the city of Oakland, I'm very committed to its welfare, I'm committed to the people who live here. I love the fact that we're so diverse. I love the fact that we're very liberal. I'm a very liberal guy!"

Tucker said that crime in North Oakland (a large area that includes Rockridge) is low. OPD is conducting a citywide violent-crime reduction program, but violent crimes against persons – rape, robbery, aggravated assault and homicide – have been minimal in this area for several years, he said. "I'm happy to report that your crime categories are either all down or pretty much manageable for us."



Oakland Police Chief Wayne Tucker

Police Lieutenant Lawrence Green

Tucker expects to have Oakland Measure Y's 63 new cops (there are currently 739), 57 of whom will be dedicated community-policing officers (one for each beat in the city), hired, trained and up-and-running by 2007.

During his own presentation, Green concurred with Tucker about the safety of North Oakland. "Crime here IS low," he said, citing a 20% overall reduction since last year and a 50% reduction in aggravated assaults specifically. But, he said, car thefts are up here, and he warned residents against a false sense of security: "I think before the cat burglar (the hills cat-burglar of 2004) came, people were a little bit too relaxed and felt like they lived in Mayberry. You do live in an urban environment… and you need to do some basic things to protect yourself and your assets. You need to harden your targets of your house, your car and so on. Realistically with property crimes, you are the first line of defense."

Green said the notion that a cop would happen be on your block and catch someone breaking into your house is a "needle-in-a-haystack kind of proposition," and advised neighbors to watch out for each other and call OPD about anything that looks suspicious.

"Until you get the Measure Y cops, there isn't any cop just lollygagging through your neighborhood," he said, responding to the audience question, "Why don't I see a patrol car in my neighborhood?" He said patrol cops are always either on 911 calls or cruising focused-enforcement areas. "When we get the dedicated beat cop for this beat (Rockridge), then you're gonna have one person who can really focus on all of your concerns."

Montauk introduced North Oakland's two "Problem Solving Officers," Debi Mack and Steve Mitchell (Mack's area includes Rockridge), to the audience. "What kind of problems?" someone asked Mack, who answered, "Something that might be longer term; I can do the little nuisance stuff. You know, the continuous barking dog. A lot of people feel they don't want to bother the police for that, but that's what we're here for."

Oakland's Neighborhood Services Manager, Claudia Albano, whose job it is to "manage the community side of community policing," was pitching Home Alert groups. Paul Revere succeeded in his mission, Albano said, because he knew his neighbors; but there was another rider that night. "At the beginning of the midnight ride, there were Paul Revere and William Dawes," she said. "And you might ask yourself: 'Why has no one heard of William Dawes?'"

Apparently, the hapless Dawes was a shy, scholarly type who didn't know his neighbors well enough for him to convince them to run outside and fight the British. But Paul Revere, Albano said, was a "very social guy: He was sort of the NCPC Chair, the Kiwanis Club. People knew him and they trusted him, and they did take up their arms, and they did go to Lexington and Concord for the shot heard round the world! The security of our neighborhood, of our block, of our community, of our country, really rests on our relationships with each other."

Albano said she thinks having a Home Alert group is nothing less than a civic duty, and that getting to know your neighbors is a revolutionary act.

☛ See page 12 for a list of local crime-fighting groups and law enforcement contact phone numbers.

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Upper Broadway Corridor: Residents Want Safety and Streetscape Improvements

by Steve Meyer

More than 25 residents gathered at the Rockridge Library July 27 to discuss safety concerns about the "Upper Broadway corridor," the stretch of Broadway from the Highway 24 interchange to its intersection of College Avenue. Ideally, this corridor should serve as a parkway for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars rather than as a hazardous freeway for speeding traffic.

Since Broadway serves as a major conduit into and out of downtown Oakland, maintaining efficient traffic flow is very important. But with high residential density and nearby schools and daycare centers along the artery, pedestrian and bicycle safety must be major priorities.

Residents at the meeting expressed concerns about speeding traffic and a lack of well-marked pedestrian crosswalks and bicycle lanes. A 2002 traffic study found that speeds along Broadway averaged 40 MPH at Napa and 39 MPH at Lawton. While those speeds seem close to the 35 MPH limit, they represent average speeds. Many cars race by on Broadway at highway speeds. With so few crosswalks, simply crossing Broadway can be perilous. Participants suggested that a "road diet," reducing traffic lanes to create turning and bicycle lanes, would significantly improve safety.

In addition to safety issues, "nuisance" items like traffic noise and parking were discussed along with street and sidewalk improvements. Suggestions for enhancing the streetscape ranged from planting additional trees to adding a center median, with or without trees, similar to those on Broadway south of the College Avenue intersection. Residents also recommended sidewalk improvements and better street lighting.

There is still a lot of planning and work ahead that will require the sustained participation of residents, RCPC, the City Council, Oakland's Public Works, Traffic Engineering, and Police departments. To support these efforts, contact Steve Meyer (upperbroadway@sbcglobal.net or 510/655-6081). In the coming weeks, residents along the Upper Broadway corridor will be going door-to-door to ask about other concerns. Also, an online Yahoo! Group has formed to facilitate communication: http://groups.yaroo.com/group/upperbroadwayproject.

The next meeting is set for 7 p.m., Thursday, September 29, in the Rockridge Library upstairs meeting room.

Creek-to-Bay Day: Temescal Creek Cleanup

Saturday, September 17, 9a.m. – noon, rain or shine

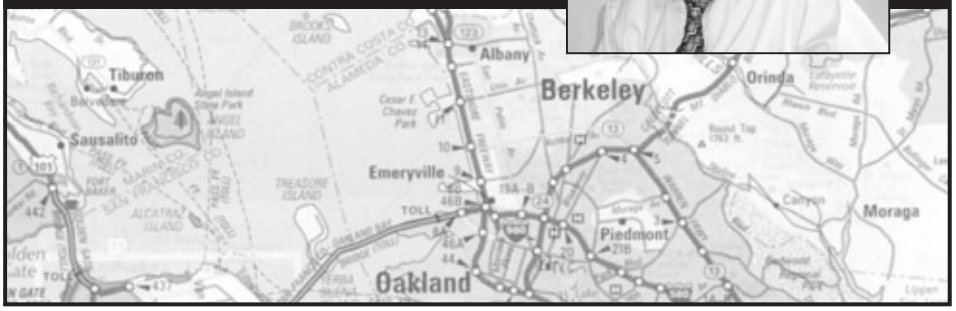
Volunteers are invited to meet at Temescal Creek where it runs through the DMV parking lot at Claremont and Cavour. Potluck follows from 12:15 to 1:30 at the corner of Redondo at Cavour. Oakland's Public Works Environmental Services division will supply tools (loppers. rakes, hoes, brooms, litter pickup sticks and other items), but if you have a favorite tool, mark it with your name and bring it along. Wheelbarrows are especially useful. Wear outdoor clothing and closed-toe shoes, boots for creek work and, if you want, your own gloves. For the potluck, a side dish or salad to share would be welcome. The Colombo Club will provide pasta and garlic bread, and the DMV Neighbors Association (DNA) will provide dessert and beverages.

This important work benefits us all with a neater, clearner creek in the neighborhood.

This event is sponsored by DNA and the City of Oakland. For more information, call Margaret, 655-1767.

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Artist Selected for Frog Park Public Art Project

by Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig

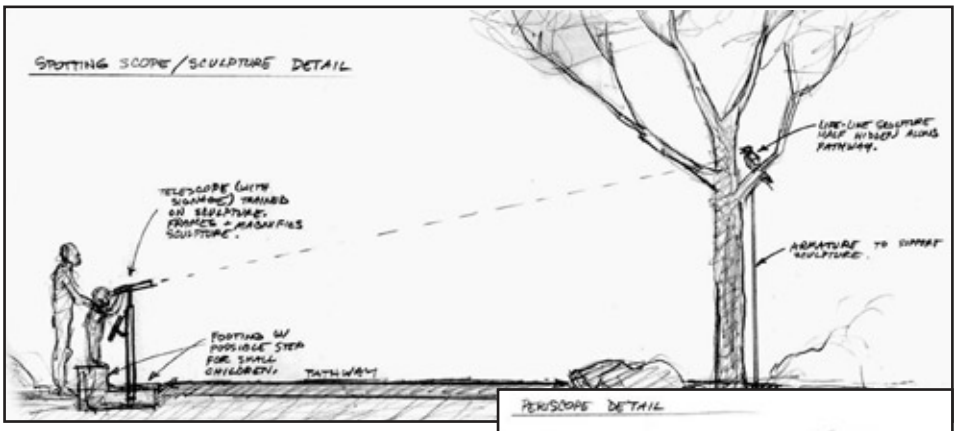
Mark Brest van Kampen has been selected from among three finalists to create public art for Rockridge's FrogPark, according to Steven Huss, Director of the Oakland Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC). Huss noted that the selection still must be approved by the Cultural Arts Commission, the Life Enrichment Committee and the City Council.

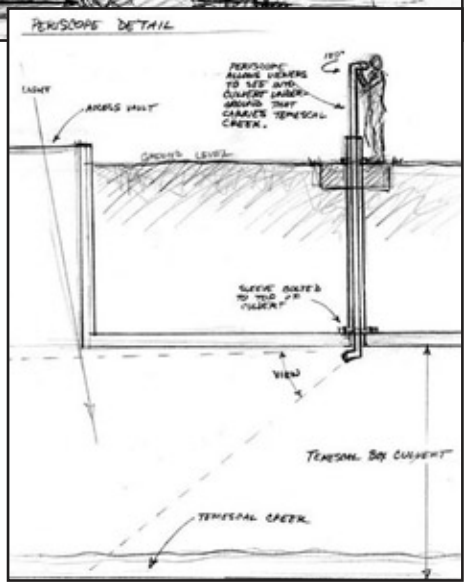
Upon final approval, PAAC staff will contract with the artist for design, fabrication and installation of the project. The award is for $60,000, funded through a combination of City of Oakland Percent for Art Funds, Bond Measure DD, community contributions to FROG Park and additional Measure DD funds for creek interpretive materials.

Van Kampen, an Oakland resident, has worked on many environmental public art projects and has taught and exhibited widely. His Greenbelt proposal combines 12 spotting scopes focused on strategically placed sculptures and signage to draw viewers' attention to the history and ecology of the Greenbelt and Temescal Creek.

"The first view will be subterranean," he said, explaining that a periscope will allow viewers to see three meters below their feet into the culvert that carries Temscal Creek underground. A sign will outline and explain the engineering of the watershed and its impact on the ecology of the area.

Other scopes will be permanently trained on sculptures of native plants and endangered animals like the red-legged Frog and Cooper's hawk. Peering at them through scopes will heighten awareness of the natural history of the Greenbelt.





Sketches of FROG Park art submitted by winner Mark Brest van Kampen. Above, spotting scope trained on sculpture of native bird. Right, periscope

Van Kampen has worked on other creek projects in urban settings, including the Ravenna Creek project in Seattle, a mile-long corridor of art tracing Ravenna Creek which runs under city streets and surfaces in a park. He was also commissioned by the California Academy of Sciences to create six signs around San Francisco that reveal what the sites would have looked like before the city was built. During a residency for the Marin Headlands Center for the Arts, van Kampen designed gray water systems using marshes as biological filters to clean water from washing machines. He also has team taught with a Stanford geologist, blending art with science to interpret the hydrology of the Mono Lake Death Valley area.

The artist's work is "site-specific rather than media-specific," using whatever materials are appropriate to the project. He works with a regular team including a welder, blacksmith, glass specialist, tile maker, sign fabricator and general fabricator.

The other two finalists were Mark Bullwinkle and the team of Lauri Twitchell and Tracey Cockrell, selected from a field of 17 at a meeting last summer. The three finalists each received a stipend of $1,000 to develop their original sketches.

Note: Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig is a member of the PAAC and served as the non-voting chair of the selection process.



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73 Beechwood Dr.	5/5.5	$ 2,695,000	$ 2,648,630	7/26/05
5532/4 Claremont	3/3	$ 795,000	$ 805,000	7/29/05
5433 Carlton St.	5/2.5	$ 699,000	$ 970,000	8/1/05
5869 Chabot Ct.	3/2	$ 795,000	$ 953,000	8/1/05
6110 Colby St.	2/1	$ 530,000	$ 590,000	8/2/05
322 Clifton St.	2/1	$ 695,000	$ 875,000	8/5/05
6329 Colby St.	2/1	$ 499,500	$ 650,000	8/5/05

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More Letters to The Editor

Transit Village/Correction," from page 2

exceed three stories) when the opportunity arises, knowing that the more eyes are on our street, the safer it will be and the more economically viable. The RCPC will restate again the parameters of our policy regarding development in the October issue of *The Rockridge News*.

— Deborah Weinstein, RCPC Chair

Greater density needed in Rockridge

Editor:

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has estimated that approximately 1.6 million new people will be joining us in the Bay Area over the next 20 years. Our neighborhood, in fact all neighborhoods, must change by accepting a modest increase in density around the transit hubs unless we want all the beautiful rolling hills and open space in the Bay Area built upon. The demand for housing seems to give us a choice: build houses on all our remaining natural areas or build more houses/apartments in areas already developed. We can increase density and to do it in a way that is creative and well designed. It can be done and there are many examples.

Rockridge is a desirable place to live because others before had a vision of a good neighborhood plan in the face of increasing development. It can continue to be a leader by seeing the big picture. Our quality of life will get worse if we resist making the needed changes.

— Betsy York

What does the RCPC Board Mean by "Infill"?

Editor:

I don't understand what the RCPC Board proposes regarding higher-density "infill" development. Will it be along College Avenue, which already allows residential development, or will it be at other locations in the neighborhood surrounding the BART station? While the main Rockridge streets, such as Claremont, Broadway and Alcatraz, allow apartment buildings, the rest of Rockridge is designated single-family housing. Is the Board planning to change that zoning to restrict proposals to the three arteries? I also wonder where the infill residents will park. Our streets are so crowded now that I often can't find a place to park at night on my own block. As I understand the C-31 zoning, each newly constructed apartment would require one parking space. Will this also be true of infill development?

— Joe Orenstein

Beware of BART Bus Zone Parking Ticket Trap

Editor:

In May, I drove a friend o the MacArthur BART station. Before I could pull away from the curb, an Alameda County Sheriff's car pulled up and gave me a $250 (!!!) ticket. I had unknowingly pulled into the bus zone in front of BART. There were taxicabs parked near there so it didn't seem obvious that there was a problem dropping passengers there. It's so dark under the BART tracks that a driver can't determine it's illegal to unload passengers.

Since then I've seen the Sheriff's cars giving the same ticket over and over under the Rockridge BART station on College (I've seen it happen four times in one week). The Sheriff's deputy sits parked near Keith and College and waits for someone to drop off passengers, then immediately pulls up and issues the ticket.

This certainly looks like the twin of the rural "speed traps" I remember from my younger days in Nevada. It appears that the Sheriff's Department has discovered a money-maker and is using it to the fullest. I also understand that the Sheriff's Department may be contracting with AC Transit to police these bus zones. So maybe this is a way AC Transit is trying to fix gaps in their budget.

Oh… did I mention that the only way one can contest these tickets is to try to work through a mailbox address in Southern California listed on the ticket?

— Jamie Pillers





The Merits of Redevelopment Districts, Pro and Con

Proposal to expand Broadway development to 51st Street stirs debate

by Jessica Pitt

These days, as cities face growing budget shortfalls, one of the few sources of financing available for development projects — from street improvements to new parks to revitalizing neighborhood commercial corridors — comes from "redevelopment districts."

Huge areas of West and East Oakland are already designated as redevelopment areas, and now there's talk about including parts of North Oakland abutting Rockridge in a redevelopment district. But a proposal to expand the Broadway/MacArthur/San Pablo Redevelopment District has met with mixed reactions from residents in City Council District One.

In mid-May, the City proposed expanding the existing Broadway/MacArthur/San Pablo Redevelopment District. Currently, the district includes two sub-areas in North Oakland. The Broadway/MacArthur sub-area encompasses Broadway Auto Row to Telegraph Avenue between 27th and 42nd Streets. The San Pablo sub-area includes the portion of San Pablo that runs from 53rd Street to 67th Street. The expanded district would incorporate the area west of Telegraph and 42nd Street to San Pablo and north to the Berkeley border at 67th Street. It would also include parcels that front the Broadway commercial corridor between 42nd and 51st Streets. Altogether, the expanded area would cover 880 acres of North Oakland.

Most of the controversy revolves around three hot button issues. The first has to do with the financing of redevelopment districts. Funds for redevelopment projects are generated by freezing property taxes at their current value when the redevelopment district is approved. Then, as property taxes go up over the life of the district (usually 30-45 years), the tax increment above the frozen value is set aside for investment in the redevelopment area. This funding mechanism is called tax increment financing.

Opponents argue that redevelopment districts capture money that would otherwise go to the General Fund, thereby reducing the amount of money available for police, fire, libraries, schools and other essential services. Proponents point out that the benefit of a redevelopment district is that tax money from the district itself becomes available to make improvements that directly benefit residents living in the area, such as streetscape and infrastructure improvements, building and housing rehabilitation, and construction of new buildings on vacant or under-utilized lots.

The second issue has to do with what constitutes a redevelopment district. To be eligible for redevelopment status, an area must be physically or economically blighted. Opponents object to the designation of this particular area of North Oakland as blighted. They argue that the area is rapidly gentrifying and successfully attracting private investment on its own without government intervention. Supporters, on the other hand, point out that commercial corridors have not kept pace with residential areas, and say these areas could benefit from the investment that would come from redevelopment funds.

Finally, perhaps the most contentious issue in the debate around redevelopment is the use of eminent domain, which can be used to clear blighted properties and make way for new development. Many people fear that the power of eminent domain will be used to legally seize residences. However, both City staff and Council Member Jane Brunner have publicly said that eminent domain would not be used to take peoples' homes.

The decision to expand the North Oakland Redevelopment District is currently on hold. Jane Brunner has been gathering input from District One residents, and will continue to work with the community to explore various options, which might include narrowing the proposed area or abandoning the plan altogether. In the meantime, residents continue to vocally advocate both for and against the project.



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Dr. Jill Martenson, Rockridge neighbor since 1999.

Renovation

from page 1

replacing old favorites—like granite—in popularity and functionality. View a slide show of stunning kitchen projects, and learn how Kathy and her team of experts blend materials like stone, tile, glass and steel to yield a warm, inviting space that suits the specific needs and personality of its owner. Glean a few of her trade secrets, including how and why to incorporate your everyday living into your kitchen. Kathy will also offer valuable information about renovating other parts of your home and discuss why all (remodeling) roads often lead to the kitchen.

To complete our discussion and address some of our technical questions, we are also pleased to present builders Tom Lawrence and Mike McDonald. Mike McDonald of McDonald Construction and Development is a designer-builder who specializes in lifting homes to create a ground floor addition. This technique is often an attractive option for bungalows and other small homes with many of their original features intact.

Tom Lawrence is a builder/general contractor whose vast experience includes second storey construction and home renovation. Tom and Kathy Rogers have often worked together, with Kathy designing and Tom building second story additions, kitchens and other home renovation projects in Rockridge, and throughout Oakland.

Tom and Kathy's work is featured on this year's Rockridge Kitchen Tour, which takes place on Sunday, October 2 from 1 to 5:30p.m. Pre-Tour tickets are on sale now for $25, and can be purchased at the library before and after the September 15 kitchen and home renovation forum, as well as at other venues. (See adjoining article for locations.) Join us for an entertaining and informative meeting, and to grab Rockridge Kitchen Tour tickets at the advance-purchase price.

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Kitchen Tour

from page 1

designed and constructed almost entirely by the homeowners themselves.

If you are in the midst of a kitchen remodel, planning one in the future, or if you're just interested in seeing some of the latest ideas in kitchen design, the Rockridge Kitchen Tour has something for you. Examine hand-crafted cabinetry in fir, cherry and other luxurious woods. Marvel at the next generation of counter surfaces, from soapstone to Ceasarstone to quartz. Share innovative storage secrets, and learn how to make the most of a small space — or a large one. In many cases, our homeowners offer "before" and "after" photographs which put their project in perspective.

This year, we expect another fantastic turnout, with guests from all over the Bay Area and beyond. As the tour grows ever more popular, and as the selection process becomes more competitive, this is an event you won't want to miss.

As you stroll through some of Rockridge's finest kitchens, enjoying refreshments and the company of your neighbors and friends, know that your participation supports important community interests. RCPC is a non-profit, public benefit corporation, dedicated to serving the Rockridge community in the areas of land use, schools and parks, among others. RCPC's committees are comprised of dedicated community volunteers, working to represent our neighborhood interests in the larger Oakland community.

Get Your Tickets Now and Save.

$25 if purchased in advance!
$30 if purchased on day of tour!

Four convenient ticket purchase options are available for this year's tour:

① **Mail:** $25 advance tickets are available by clipping and mailing the coupon below. For orders received before September 15, tickets will be mailed to the address requested; for orders received after the 15th, tickets will be available for pick up on the day of the tour at the sidewalk registration desk, 5951 College Avenue (in front of the College Avenue Presbyterian Church), starting at 11 a.m.

② **Online:** $25 advance tickets may be purchased online via credit card at www.rockridge.org. Tickets purchased online will be held for pick-up on the day of the tour at the sidewalk registration desk, starting at 11 a.m.

③ **Local Business:** $25 advance tickets are available during business hours at Maison d'Être, 5640 College Avenue.

④ **Tour Registration Desk:** $30 day-of-tour tickets will be sold only at the sidewalk registration desk, starting at 11 a.m.

The 2005 Rockridge Kitchen Tour: 1-5:30 p.m., Sunday, Oct.2

For additional information, please check the RCPC website, www.rockridge.org, or call 644-4228.

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Advance Kitchen Tour Ticket Order Form

YES! I want to join the fun at the 2005 Rockridge Kitchen Tour Sunday, October 2, 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Please send me the following tickets:
___ # of tickets @ $25 advance price = $_____ total enclosed

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City_____ Zip_____

Please mail this coupon, a self-addressed stamped envelope, and your check or money order payable to:

RCPC Kitchen Tour, 5245 College Avenue PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618

Thank you!

NOTE: To ensure receiving your tickets in time for the tour, mail-in payments must be postmarked on or before September 26. Thank you.

The Rockridge Muse

by Ortrun Niesar



Postcard view, Claremont Hotel, c. 1952

Courtesy, Ed Clausen

Oakland Histories (Telling it Like it Was)

Several wonderful publications celebrating Oakland's history will be featured in Diesel and Pendragon bookstores this month. Among them is *Oakland, a Postcard History*, by Rockridge resident Annalee Allen (Arcadia Publishing, $19.99). The book features a selection of fascinating postcards chosen from over 1000 collected by Ed Clausen.

In her weekly column in the Oakland Tribune, Allen writes about landmarks and local history. She also orchestrates the Oakland Walking Tours program. She is widely recognized as an authority on Oakland's architecture and has served as president of Oakland Heritage Alliance and a member of Oakland's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board.

Other books about Oakland published by Arcadia include *Oakland's Chinatown* by William Wong, *Oakland Fire Department* by Geoffrey Hunter, and *Oakland Hills*, by Erika Mailman. Call Allen for more information about a planned signing for all four books: 238-3234.

Also, if you don't yet have a copy of *Oakland, A Photographic Journey* by Bill Caldwell and would like to order one, call 653-4311, or e-mail bill@oaklandphotojourney.com.



Hardy Park, by Lydia Gans

Rockridge Photography Exhibition (Telling it Like It Is)

The Annual Rockridge Photography Exhibition will be held at the Rockridge Library throughout October. A community event, the exhibition is loosely edited, not juried and open to all who now live, study or work in or around Rockridge or did so in the past, regardless of skill level. Passion and imagination are what we look for. Parent-and-child teams are particularly welcome. The subject is how we live, think, play and work in Rockridge. We plan eventually to weave the images into a tapestry that defines the character of Rockridge.

To submit work or get information, call Ruth Woodruff, Exhibition Coordinator, as soon as possible at 655-6081, or e-mail ruthwoodruff@gmail.com. Volunteers are also needed to help with the installation, publicity and reception. Deadline for submissions is September 25. The opening night reception is slated for Saturday, October 1.

Author, Author...

We know that many talented writers live in Rockridge. Who are you, where do you live and what have you written? We'll be glad to tell our readers all about you in the Muse. E-mail oniesar@aol.com.



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Your One-Stop Shop for Crime Stats, and More

by Janet Somers

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council:

The Rockridge NCPC meets at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month at Fire Station #8, 463 51st Street. Contact Neighborhood Services Coordinator Yeda Altes at 615-5802 for information. To volunteer for NCPC projects, including an upcoming Caltrans-area cleanup, contact NCPC Chair Susan Montauk at smontauk@juno.com.

Who to Call:

For ongoing problems (not crimes in progress), call Problem Solving Officer Debi Mack on her cellphone at 750-4556 or her office at 238-7517; or e-mail her at dmack@oakland.net.com.

For emergencies or serious crimes in progress, call 911 from land lines or 777-3211 from cellphones. (Dialing 911 from a cellphone will connect you to the CHP, who must then redirect you to OPD.)

For in-progess non-emergency problems call the OPD non-emergency number, 777-3333.

Websites:

For information on crime in North Oakland, including recent arrests and photos, visit Lt. Lawrence Green's website, www.northoaklandpolice.com, "your one-stop source to learn what is happening in your neighborhood, learn more about OPD, the City and get fresh crime stats and public safety information."

To join the Colby Park Watch Yahoo group, a network for neighbors in the Colby Park area (bounded by Claremont, Telegraph, Alcatraz and 56th), go to www.yahoogroups.com and search under "Colby Park."

Home Alert Groups:

For information on organizing a Home Alert group for your block, call Home Alert Coordinator Brenda Ivey at 777-8621.

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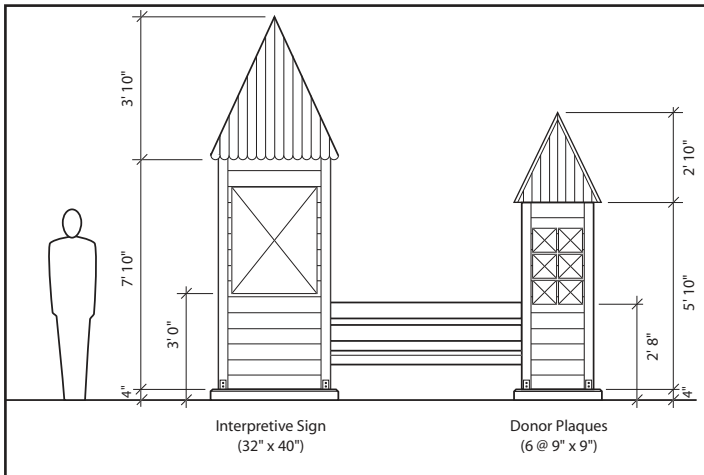
Claremont Middle School Joins College Avenue Street Fair Activities

On Sunday, September 25, Claremont Middle School will participate in the Out & About Exploring Rockridge street fair by opening its Scholastic Book Fair to the community. The school library will be transformed into a bookstore featuring the latest titles published by Scholastic Press for middle-schoolers as well as posters and other novelty items. Proceeds benefit the library. The PTA will also sell ice cream and Claremont Knights T-shirts to benefit the school arts program.

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A new community information kiosk and donor recognition structure could be built at Hardy Park later this fall, if plans currently in the works are approved.
DESIGN: LISA FERRIER

Frog Park Annual Maintenance Day, September 17

by Howard Ferrier

Join your Frog Park friends and fans for our big maintenance day and mini-build on Saturday, September 17, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Work will continue throughout the day, so come whenever your schedule permits. Please note that the Hardy and Redondo play structures will be CLOSED both Saturday and Sunday to allow time for the sealant on the play structures to dry.

This annual major maintenance day involves sanding and sealing the structures and building a small fence to separate the Hardy play structure from the sandbox and keep the sand in the sandbox. We hope to demolish the large concrete ring near Hudson Street, which was the old play area. For gardeners, we'll plant and weed along the Hardy-Clifton pathway. Later this fall, if the plans are approved, we'll construct the new community information kiosk and donor recognition structure at Hardy (see drawing at top left), designed by Rockridge resident Lisa Ferrier.

Throughout the day we'll be adding new fibar and sand to the play areas, and as in past years, we'll be joined by the freshman class of the College Preparatory School, who will provide welcome muscle and enthusiasm.

FROG Park Needs You!

The FROG Committee needs your help to make the park a continuing success. Volunteer positions now available include:

- Maintenance Captains
- Food Coordinator (for maintenance days)
- Phase Two Coordinator for FROG-built projects (new plaza and others)
- Communications Coordinator
- Gardeners and Horticultural Coordinator
- Treasurer

To join or learn more, contact Howard Ferrier at hwferrier@sbcglobal.net or 653-6463. See you on the 17th.



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RN classifieds

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Your 36-word message: $18 (phone number counts as one word). Mail to: **RN Classifieds**, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618. *October deadline is September 15.*
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Peralta Elementary School, 460 63rd Street. Mon/Wed 5:30; Tu/Th 6:15 pm; Sat 9:00 am. New Students $8/wk. First class free. 654-7078. www.jazzercise.com

Handmade Paper & Mixed Media Art Classes in North Oakland

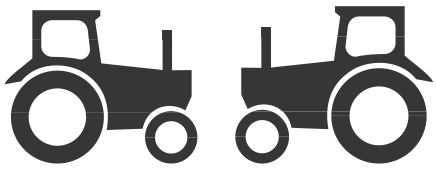
Learn papermaking and explore media (watercolors, acrylics & found materials) and techniques (collage, painting, printmaking). Two Wednesday classes (1-4 & 7-9:30 pm) start 9/21/05. Linda 510.428-2915. www.LindaLemon.com.

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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, 10 a.m. to noon. **No September meeting. October meeting Topic: Cal Trans issues, including Caldecott tunnel 4th bore.** Peralta Elementary School, 460 63rd St. (parking on Alcatraz Ave., just east of Telegraph). For information on all District One 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 8:30pm at Fire Station #8, 463 51st Street.

Rockridge Kitchen Tour

Sunday, October 2, 1pm to 5:30 pm. Bi-annual RCPC fundraiser. See coupon, page 10, to purchase advance tickets. More information: 644-4228.

Rockridge Annual Street Fair

Sunday, September 25, 11 am to 5 pm on College Avenue between Alcatraz and Broadway. Live music and dancing, food and wine tasting, picnic in the street and other events.

Temescal Creek Cleanup & Lunch

Saturday, September 17, 9 am to noon. Meet at DMV parking lot, corner of Redondo and Cavour. Pasta lunch, dessert and drinks provided. Bring a potluck side dish to share. For questions, call Margaret at 655-1767.

Rockridge Branch Library

For Children:

- **Toddler Story Time:** 1st and 2nd Saturdays, 10:30am: 9/3, 9/10, 10/1, 10/8.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am: 9/21, 10/5. NOTE: no pre-school story time 1st week in September.
- **Pajama Story Time**: 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7pm: 9/13, 9/27.

For Teens:

- **Bookwormz** (Teen Book Club): last Tuesday evening of each month at 5pm: 9/27.

For Adults:

- **Lawyers in the Library**: Free legal advice. First Tuesday of each month: 6 to 8pm. Advance sign-up starts 5pm.

ART EXHIBITS

In The Gallery:

- September: **Susan Hall** and **Mike G**. Surprise exhibit!

In The Display Case:

- September: **Claire Lomax**; Paper sculpture and collage.

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.

Workshop For Story Readers

Gay Ducey, Children's Librarian at the Rockridge Branch Library, will hold 7 training workshops on story reading and storytelling skills, starting Tuesday, September 13 from 6pm to 8:15pm at the Rockridge Library. Participants will learn the art of story reading to become Volunteer Head-Start Storyreaders. Space is limited: call 238-7453 to reserve a spot.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings

All events are FREE and open to the public

- Thursday, 9/8, 7:30pm. Local poets, Laynie **Brown, Jean Day, Dana Goodyear and Tessa Rumsey** will read from their newly published works.
- Thursday, 9/22, 7:30pm. **Joan Bechtel** and **Linda Cohen**: *Motherhood Confidential: The Strange Disappearance of My Best Friend*.
- Sunday, 10/2, 2pm. **Dan Savage:** *The Commitment: Love, Sex, Marriage and My Family.*
- Wednesday, 10/5, 7:30pm. **Daniel Goleman**: has written the introduction to *Blazing Splendor: The Memoirs of Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche* as told to **Erik Pema Kunsang** and **Marcia Binder Schmidt**. They will all be here to discuss the book.

5433 College Ave. For information about book discussion groups and classes:
653-9965 or www.dieselbookstore.com.

Writers Support/Critique Group

ALL writers welcome. Bring at least 10 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, third Saturday of the month 1 to 5pm. For more information: 482-0265 or Writefox@aol.com.

Christiansen Heller Gallery

Sapphire Seminar, 9/25, 2 to 3pm. Offered as the Gallery's participation in **A Month for CERF,** the annual September event that raises funds for the **Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)** which offers direct financial and educational assistance to craft artists nationwide. For more information, visit www.craftemergency.org. 5829 College Avenue. For more information: Jan Christiansen Heller, 655-5952 or jan@christensenheller.com.

Frog Park Big Build Phase II

Saturday, September 1, 9am to 4pm. Projects will be going on all day and lunch will be provided. For more information: call Howard Ferrier at 653-6463 or hwferrier@sbcglobal.net.

Sick Plant Clinic

Bring your ailing plants to the University of California Botanical Garden and get a free diagnosis by a team of expert UC plant pathologists and entomologists. First Saturday each month from 9am to noon. First Saturday of each month, 9 am to noon. UC Botanical Garden, 200 Centennial Drive, Berkeley (above Cal Memorial Stadium in Strawberry Canyon). For more information: 643-2755 or http://botanicalgarden.berkeley.edu.

Activities and 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, call Kathy at 531-6724.

• North Oakland Multi-Purpose Senior Center

Program Highlights: Computer classes; Health Insurance counseling and advocacy program; driver safety; trips, tours and theater outings. Center Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:45am to 4:45pm. 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. 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). Call 597-5085 for details about membership, newsletter, classes/events and opportunities to become a volunteer.

Oakland Museum White Elephant Sale

Accepting donations for the 2006 sale from 10am to 12pm on Sept.10 (call for additional dates) at their warehouse, 333 Lancaster Street. For FREE van pickup call 839-5919. More details at 536-6800.

Food Recycler Needs Space

Daily Bread, the volunteer group that picks up leftover food from Market Hall daily and delivers it to shelters for folks in need, still is in need of a spot in the neighborhood to keep its refrigerator for situations where deliveries can't be made until the morning after the pickup. An accessible back yard or garage would be ideal. Any leads, suggestions, please call Joan Sautter: 655-6432 or 415/986-1338 x133.

Volunteers Needed

- **Second Start Adult Literacy Program**: Teach an adult to read. Free training. Nine month minimum commitment. Volunteers can meet with their students at the Rockridge Branch Library. For more information: 238-3432 or www.oaklandlibrary.org/services/SecondStart.
- **Friends of Temescal Creek**: Monitor water quality by collecting water samples at Temescal Lake for analysis. Important for Rockridge residents because Temescal Creek runs above ground near Frog Park. Volunteers meet on the third Saturday of each month from 10am to noon. Regular commitment preferred. For more information and for where to meet, contact Friends of Temescal Creek at fotc2005@yahoo.com.

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