THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

VOL. 21 ■ NO. 3 ■ ISSUE NO. 221 ■ March 4, 2006 ■ CIRCULATION: 5,100 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

Sponsored by The Rockridge Community Planning Council • 5245 College Ave. PMB 311 • Oakland, CA 94618 • 869-4200

Hey! Rockridge News... Happy 20th Birthday!

Welcome to the 20th Anniversary Issue of *The Rockridge News!*

Since its raw beginning as hand-written notices stapled to telephone poles in 1986 as a call-to-arms response to Rockridge development proposals, *The Rockridge News* has evolved from a single-page publication to a full-blown, 16-page newsletter. In continuous publication since its beginning, the paper has always been sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) as a reflection of the organization's interest in getting important neighborhood news directly to neighbors.

In celebration of our 20th year of publication, this issue only has expanded to 20 pages, with six pages in color. On the front page and inside, we consider Rockridge's changes as well as providing the usual up-to-date look at what's going on in the present.

Join us, once again, and enjoy!

— Cy Gulassa, Editor

Traffic Studies for Upper Broadway

Outcome could be bicycle lanes and new traffic solutions

by Steve Meyer, Chair, Rockridge Traffic, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee



During a recent Rockridge Traffic, Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety (TPBS) Committee meeting, members heard an update by Jason Patton, of the Oakland Pedestrian Safety Project, on the status of the Bicycle Master Plan and they discussed a proposal to integrate those planning efforts into the TPBS Committee's goals

Traffic Plans, page 14

Rockridge Then and Now: The More Things Change…

by Annette Floystrup, Rockridge resident since 1955

Ask most people why they live in Rockridge and you will immediately hear a group of common reasons: wonderful and architecturally interesting housing; a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented shopping and dining "main" street; great public and private transportation for commuting near and far; and a wonderful sense of community supported by a vital neighborhood association.

Amazingly, if you had asked a Rockridge resident that question in 1920, you would have heard much the same thing.

Housing Stock

In the 10 years following the 1906 earthquake, Oakland's population more than doubled from 66,960 to over 150,000 as people and businesses relocated from earthquake-ravaged San Francisco. There was a desperate need for housing. In upper North Oakland, a tract of land was subdivided above Broadway in 1910, and named "Rockridge Place." In all, three tracts were subdivided from 51st Street to Ocean View and up to about where Highway 13 runs now. The lots were ample, expensive and intended to attract wealthy residents who wished to enjoy fine living. The large and magnificent white entrance gates on Broadway stand today as a testament to the developer's intent, as do the many lovely homes.



Entrance to early Rockridge development on Broadway.

Those who could not quite afford the high prices in Rockridge Place found

Rockridge History, page 4

RCPC Seeks Board Candidates

by Deborah Weinstein, RCPC Chair

Are you interested in developing a community center? Organizing our community to prevent crime? Increasing safety for pedestrians and bicyclists? Improving the Under-BART plaza? Encouraging community involvement in our public schools? Addressing traffic and parking problems? Well, Rockridge needs people

RCPC Seeks Candidates, page 3

agenda: RCPC Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 7:00 pm
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College Avenue at Manila;
Community Room

■ **Preventing Identify Theft; and What to do if it Happens to You:** Identity theft is a growing threat in today's sometimes shadowy cyber-world when our personal information is more available than we may realize. When someone uses your personal information without your permission to commit fraud or other crimes, you become a victim of identity theft. Because

Identity Theft, page 1



Maureen Clarke, at left, gathered each month with Rockridge neighbors (to Maureen's right) Jo Ellis, Gail Durkin, David and Patrick Young, and Susan Montauk to bundle *The Rockridge News* for delivery to Rockridge residents by the 148 volunteers who deliver the paper. Maureen passed away enexpectedly last month. We will miss her.

PHOTO: KEN ELLIS

In Memoriam
Maureen Clarke

In the summer of 1950, Maureen Clarke and her friend Dorothy Sterns had just graduated from Jordan High School in Long Beach, California, and they were looking for adventure. Maureen proposed a train trip to the Midwest to visit a new friend at the University of Chicago. Marureen's father, wary of two young, innocent girls taking a train trip alone, spied two marines sitting across the railroad car aisle and asked the young men to keep an eye on the girls, much to their embarrassment. The Chicago visit completed, and beyond the watchful eye of her father, Maureen proposed a side trip to New Orleans, a first trip to the "old south" for both girls and one that would provide a lesson in the social inequalities of the time. In New Orleans they boarded a bus and made their way to the comfortable seats in the back. Soon, the bus pulled over to the shoulder where a couple of uniformed officials were waiting. The two men entered the bus and made straight to the back to take the girls to the white section in the front of the bus. While being "escorted" to the front seats, according to her friend Dorothy, Maureen, a quick and creative thinker, was outraged and protested at the top of her lungs all the way down the aisle, "But, you can't do this. I'm a mulatto! I'm a mulatto!"

The modest, former teacher, wife of 47 years and mother of two, who once a month sat with our small group to bundle *The Rockridge News* for the last four years with her dog Bear obediently at her feet, seemed very different from the rebellious, strong-willed fighter for social justice that relatives and friends described at her memorial service on February 8. Maureen, born in 1932, died in her sleep at her Broadway Terrace home on February 1. She grew up in Southern California during World War II with strong convictions and passions. She defended her friends and her honor, even if it meant fisticuffs on the playground to set a bully straight or risking her teaching job to stand up at a school board meeting for a friend who had been fired. We knew that Maureen loved to travel; she related some of her adventures. We later found out that her travels took her to 30 countries on five continents and that she often traveled to those exotic places on her own, striking up friendships and inviting adventures wherever she went. The Maureen we knew loved to read — she volunteered at the Rockridge Library, helping to choose the "good books" among the hundreds that are donated — and had definite opinions about politics and restaurants, but was a good listener and a reliable volunteer. She will be missed by all who knew her. She leaves behind her husband Henry Clarke, a former American Federation of Teachers union organizer, her son Cameron, an elementary school teacher, and a grandson.

— *Susan Montauk*

ROCKRIDGE BRANCH LIBRARY

5366 College Avenue
597-5017
HOURS:
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 19.

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.

***Rockridge News* Production**

Cy Gulassa ..... Editor
Ortrun Niesar ..... The Muse
Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig .... Writer
Barry Kaufman ..... Food
Jo Ellis ..... Advertising & Community Calendar
Theresa Nelson ..... Neighborhood Merchant
Lydia Gans ..... Photography
Susan Montauk ..... Business Manager
Don Kinkead ..... Graphics & Layout

RCPC Board of Directors, 2005-2006

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NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

For annual subscriptions to ***The Rockridge News***, send your check for $20, payable to *Rockridge News* Subscriptions, to: *Rockridge News* Subscriptions at the address below.

CONTACTING *THE ROCKRIDGE NEWS*

- 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?
- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

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: 510/869-4200

Articles published in *The Rockridge News* may be reprinted only with the permission of the Editor.

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES

Publication date of the next issue is
☛ April 8, 2006
☛ April deadline is March 23.

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.)*

RCPC 2005 Financial Statement

(Cash Basis)

RCPC General Fund	
Income	
Rockridge News	$35,643
Kitchen Tour	23,195
Other Fundraising (ex. K-tour)	866
Interest Income	260
Total Income	59,964
Expenses	
Rockridge News	32,647
Other Program Expenses	807
Kitchen Tour	6,344
Other Fundraising Expenses	802
Grants	600
Legal & Accounting	-
Insurance, Permits and Sales Tax	2,063
Misc. Administrative Expenses	1,356
Total Expenses	44,617
Net Receipts	15,347
Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL)	
Income	
Donations	2,569
Merchandising (e.g. book sales)	2,181
Interest Income	1,106
Total Income	5,856
Expenses	
Gifts to the Library	14,740
Misc. Administrative Expenses	159
Total Expenses	14,899
Net Receipts	(9,044)
Friends of the Rockridge Greenbelt (FROG)	
Income	
Donations	11,988
Interest Income	376
Total Income	12,364
Expenses	
Playground Build & Maintenance	1,827
Misc. Administrative Expenses	441
Total Expenses	2,267
Net Receipts	10,096
Whistlestop Account	No activity in 2005
Locksley Gardens	No activity in 2005
Assets (1)	
Cash Accounts	
RCPC	36,205
FORL	15,520
FROG (2)	61,822
Whistlestop	705
Locksley Gardens	609
Other Assets	
RCPC CDs	20,916
FORL CDs	30,871
FROG Custodial/Phase II Restricted Gifts	23,035
Total Assets (1)	189,683
Liabilities	
FORL: Oxford Univ Press Balance	4,019
Total Liabilities	4,019

(1) Excludes the recent $100k pledge by Councilmember Ignacio de la Fuente to Phase II as well as the remaining balance of public funds pledged in 2001 from Councilmember Jane Brunner's Paygo Account for capital improvements to the Greenbelt.

(2) A portion of these funds are restricted gifts towards specific items planned for Phase II development.

RCPC tax records are on file at the Rockridge Library for public review.

The Zoning Counter

5417 Shafter Ave.

Proposal: To raise an existing single-family dwelling 2.5' in height creating new habitable space at the ground floor level and convert the existing attic space into a new master bedroom with a new dormer on the rear-facing porting of the existing roof. Total added floor area of 1,236 s.f. to an existing 1,386 s.f. single-family residence.

Applicant: Patrick Hogue

Contact: Patrick Hogue 510/594-1748

Owner: Patrick Hogue

Planning Permits Required: Residential Design Review per Section 17.136 for additions and alterations to an existing single-family dwelling, and a Minor Variance to increase the degree of an existing nonconformity by increasing the height of an existing structure within the minimum side yard setback (Note: The existing building is located 2.48' at the front right corner, .57' at the mid-portion and .62' at the rear right corner, whereas 5' minimum is required).

Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Property (PDHP); Survey rating: Dc2+, located in the Hudson and Shafter Historic District.

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

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The Zoning Counter is a compilation of recent applications filed with the Oakland Planning Department. Individuals may contact the case planner or the Planning Department for additional information by phone or on-line at www.oaklandnet.com.

The Rockridge News: 20 Years of Service and Support

by Don Kinkead, Rockridge News Layout

A glance through this issue of *The Rockridge News* might lead one to ask if it is about the history of Rockridge or about a celebration of the newsletter's 20th anniversary. The answer is: It is both. As long-time Rockridge resident Annette Floystrup points out in her article (page 1), the Rockridge neighborhood has always been intertwined with neighborhood associations. From the Vernon Park Club to today's Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), Rockridge residents have taken a passionate interest in the doings of their neighborhood. Over time, that passion led to *The Rockridge News*.

In 1986, College Avenue was faced with development plans that raised neighbors' concerns. Notices posted on telephone poles gave way to a single-page newsletter created on a Macintosh with PageMaker software. Then, timely delivery of the fledgling newsletter was assured when Bobbie Kinkead and Barbara Anderson designed a Rockridge-wide distribution system involving more than 140 volunteer residents.

Fast-forward to the present when the single page has grown to 16 pages monthly, with a special 20 page issue this month, all produced and distributed by Rockridge residents. Published under the dedicated sponsorship of RCPC, *The Rockridge News* will continue to be of service to Rockridge.

RCPC Seeks Candidates

from page 1

like you. Serving on the Board of Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) will enable you to work on these issues and make Rockridge a more thriving, dynamic community.

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 at least 18 years of age, reside within RCPC boundaries and indicate their intention to run for office by March 16. (A map and description of RCPC boundaries is available online at www.rockridge.org.)

Organized in 1985 as a 501(c)(3) organization, RCPC represents Rockridge to the City of Oakland on issues that affect the community. RCPC acts as a community steward on a variety of issues. A 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 16 for publication in the April issue of *The Rockridge News*. Please include your address, phone number and e-mail address. Mail hard copies to RCPC, 5245 College Ave, PMB 311, Oakland, CA, 94618. Electronic copies can be sent via e-mail to deborahlweinstein@yahoo.com.

Candidates will speak, and voting will take place at the April 20 General Meeting at the Rockridge Library, from 7 pm on, and again on Saturday, April 22. All Rockridge residents, age 18 and over, are eligible to vote.

For further information, e-mail RCPC Chair Deborah Weinstein at deborahlweinstein@yahoo.com, or call 595-3352.

Rockridge History

from page 1

homes in the Vernon Tract, the land on either side of College Avenue. The truck farms and orchards west of College Avenue gave way to Craftsman bungalows by the dozen, most built between 1910 and 1920. Scattered in between were late-era Victorians and the occasional original farmhouse.

College Avenue

College Avenue is distinguished by the presence of internationally recognized colleges on either end. Oddly, these two swapped cities in the beginning of their histories. UC Berkeley began life in Oakland as The College School on Fifth and Broadway in 1853 and moved to Berkeley upon the completion of North and South Halls in 1873. Known for most of its history as the California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC), the California College of the Arts (CCA) was founded in 1907 and moved to its present site at College and Broadway in 1922.

From the beginning, College Avenue served the needs of the community expanding rapidly on each side. Over time there have been groceries, two movie theaters, two bowling alleys, a skating rink, two car dealerships, florists, children's and adult's clothing stores, bakeries, French laundries, dry cleaners, pharmacies, churches, banks, community halls and, later, eating establishments. On the upper floors of most buildings were commuter-oriented apartments, and two buildings had doctors and dentists upstairs (look up at Harwood and College to see the architectural evidence), plus one of the first elevators in a commercial building in Oakland.

In the early 1960s demolition began for construction of the Grove-Shafter freeway (Highway 24) and BART. 1,400 properties were demolished, mostly single-family homes. College Avenue was almost brought to its commercial knees. Construction lasted for years, and the traffic disruption, coupled with the loss of population steadily eroded the commercial base. Store after store closed its doors, until finally half of the businesses stood empty with storefronts boarded up. Crime in the area skyrocketed and by the early '70s Rockridge became Oakland's highest crime neighborhood.

Rockridge residents, now operating under the banner of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), led the way to obtaining Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding for planning studies. As a result, in 1973, the City of Oakland adopted a new zoning designation, C-31, for College Avenue consisting of pedestrian-oriented retail with mixed-use upper stories.

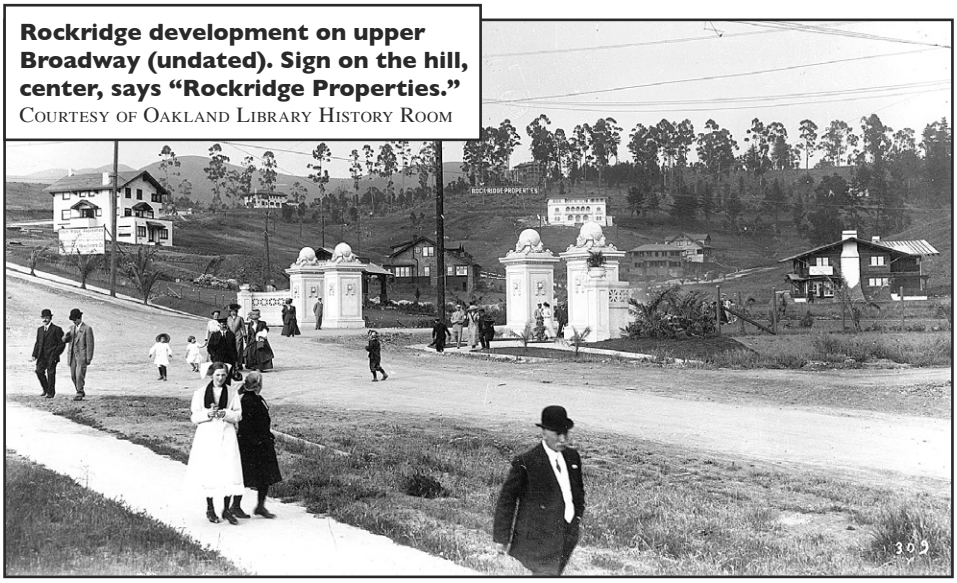
Rockridge is now studied as a Model

Continued top of next page

Rockridge – Chimes – Rockridge: What's in a Name?

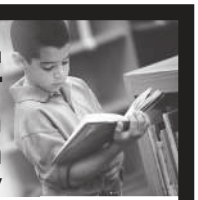
Many of us who lived here in the '60s recall the surprise we felt when BART named the newly built station on College Avenue "Rockridge." We thought we lived in Chimes, and that the name came from hearing the Campanile at UC Berkeley chime the hours, a pleasure the entire neighborhood enjoyed until the opening of the Grove-Shafter freeway and the resulting traffic noise pollution. In truth, the two names have gone back and forth over time and had nothing to do with the UC Campanile carillon bells.

The area above College Avenue got the name Rockridge from the land development, which in turn was named for a large rock outcropping, now almost obliterated. Chimes made its debut with the opening of a very fancy movie theater in 1917, which stood about where the Market Hall is today. It featured an open projecting bay 40 feet above the street housing a full set of chimes. The Chimes Theater was an immediate hit, and soon other businesses adopted the name. By the 1920s, College Avenue was known as the Chimes district. Today, the only surviving business with the Chimes name is the Chimes Pharmacy.



Rockridge development on upper Broadway (undated). Sign on the hill, center, says "Rockridge Properties."
Courtesy of Oakland Library History Room

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From previous page

Urban Area by land use planners. In 1994, the West Coast Conference on Land Use Planning conducted a tour of College Avenue during their annual meeting for planners, architects and politicians. The unique mix of College Avenue retail has made it the top sales-tax generator in Oakland for many years.

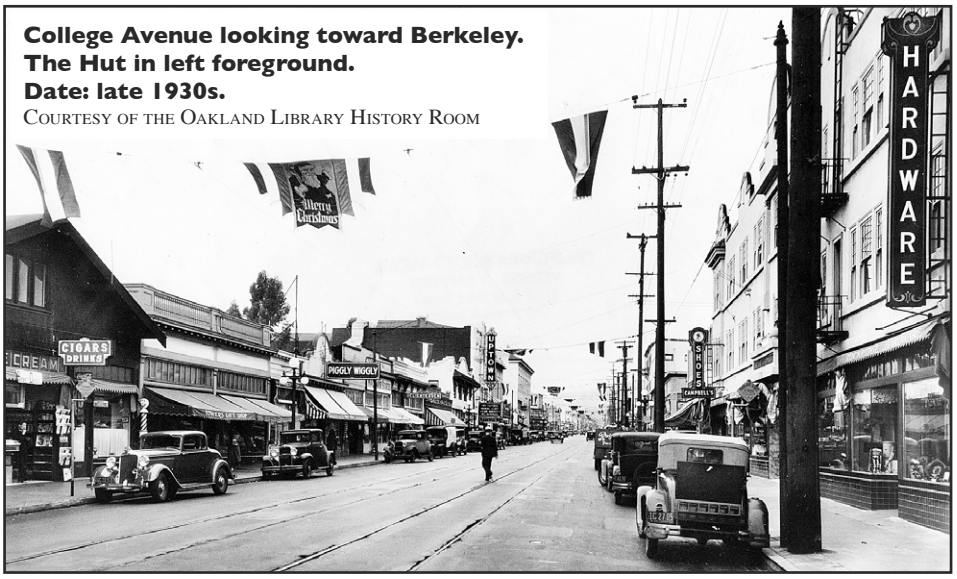
The Original Commuter Neighborhood

Rockridge is uniquely situated to take advantage of an expanded transportation system in all four directions. Commuters can take freeways, BART or bus to work in San Francisco and beyond, and few know that the routes they take were established almost 100 years ago to serve the same purpose.

The electric street-car line to Berkeley ran along College Avenue beginning in 1904. The Key System trains of the E-line began running down Claremont Avenue in 1907, about where the E bus to San Francisco runs now. Key System trains ran to the Oakland Mole, Oakland's long-demolished ferry building, and later across the bottom deck of the Bay Bridge. It took about as long to get to San Francisco then as it does today by BART. The Key System later became part of AC Transit.

By 1913, the Sacramento Northern Railroad had expanded to run on Shafter Avenue up through Chabot Canyon; it was possible to get to Sacramento in about the same amount of time as on the Amtrak specials from Emeryville now. This railway was closed in 1957, but remnants of the railway bed can be seen just off Roanoke at Chabot Road.

College Avenue looking toward Berkeley. The Hut in left foreground. Date: late 1930s.
Courtesy of the Oakland Library History Room



Since the opening of the Grove-Shafter Freeway and BART in 1970, neighbors once again have commute options like those they enjoyed in the 1930s.

A Strong Community

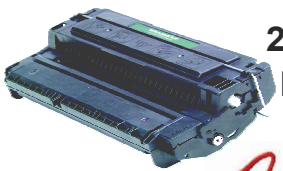
As quickly as Rockridge developed as a community, just as quickly did residents form a neighborhood association. The first was called the Vernon-Rockridge Improvement Club, later the Rockridge Improvement Club, founded in 1910. The early neighborhood association was concerned with the basics: community policing and safety, fire suppression services, schools and a library. These concerns have remained the same over the decades, changing only with technology and the challenges produced by time. The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), which arose to become the neighborhood organization for Rockridge in the 1970s and '80s to become the neighborhood organization for Rockridge, has a positive relationship with the local Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council, has helped keep Engine 19 on Miles Avenue open when it was threatened with closure, sponsors programs in our schools and built the new Rockridge library.

This month, *The Rockridge News*, begun as a single-page flyer written and photocopied by Don Kinkead, celebrates 20 years of community service and a circulation of 5,100 households and 200 businesses. Along the way, hundreds of volunteers have written articles and distributed *The Rockridge News*, and the newsletter has earned a journalism award from the American Planning Association as the best small newspaper in Northern California covering planning issues. Volunteer efforts are seldom sustained for so long; the newsletter is a unique volunteer effort.

Rockridge is one of the few neighborhoods in the nation to finance its own branch library with funds assembled through community activism. The 11-year community effort involved over 100 volunteers in various capacities at various times, and was sustained by progress reports in *The Rockridge News*. The library was built to meet the needs of the wider community with meeting rooms that are often fully booked for weeks in advance. Among other initia-

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Citizens Seek Answers at Brunner Police Meeting

by Susan Montauk,
Greater Rockridge NCPC Chair

For her February 4 Community Advisory meeting, Councilmember Jane Brunner assembled a panel of policing officials to answer North Oaklanders' queries about the perceived rise in crime in their neighborhoods. The panel, headed by OPD Chief Wayne Tucker, first spoke to the theme of the meeting — "Visions for Policing in Oakland" — and then answered hard questions from a packed auditorium of about 150 people.

Brunner directed the panel to address three concerns: when and how the 109 vacancies in the police department will be filled; how Oakland conducts criminal investigations; and how the "Riders" case has hurt Oakland.

Chief Tucker, appointed just a year ago by Mayor Brown, said he hoped that OPD would reach the Measure Y authorized number of police, 802, by spring of 2007. (But with a current force of 690 police officers, plus 22 trainees in the current academy and 20 more who started an academy on February 6, it was difficult for some attendees to see how that goal could be achieved. It would take 3,000 applicants, three times more than currently apply in one year, to reach the goal of 802 in spring of 2007.)

Bob Valledon, President of the Oakland Police Officers' Association, said it is a challenge to keep officers in OPD. While salaries may be competitive, he said, Oakland police officers take 15 times as many calls in a shift than officers of some nearby cities. Many leave Oakland to go to cities with less pressure. He recommended giving cash incentives to officers to start here and punitive payments if they leave early.

Brunner Meeting, page 14



Chief Wayne Tucker, at left, Lt. Jim Meeks, Don Link, Amy Lemley, Patrick Caseras, Bob Valledon.

PHOTO: SUSAN MONTAUK

Councilmembers Call for Police Training Academies

On February 14, Councilmember Jane Brunner and City Council President Ignacio de la Fuente introduced a resolution in the Finance Committee meeting calling for the police chief "to immediately begin as many training academies as necessary to bring the Oakland Police Department up to its current authorized strength of 802 officers as soon as possible, but no later than January 1, 2007." The resolution will be heard by the full Council on March 7. Activists in the Gaskill, Lowell, and West Street areas have organized a rally in front of City Hall that same evening from 6 to 9 pm to exhort the City to fulfill the policing quotas. Rally information and a petition can be found online at http://www.orpn.org/Gaskill_petition1.htm





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FROG Park Corner

A monthly update on what's happening at the best community-built and maintained park in Oakland



by Mike McDonald,
RCPC Board Member and
FROG Steering Committee Member

Construction Begins on Phase II

It's really going to happen: Phase II of FROG Park will begin construction in March! At the Hardy Park area, Phase II will include new swings, a water fountain, a fence to keep the kids away from Claremont Avenue, an informational kiosk, improved basketball courts, a new plaza with picnic benches and seating, and an enhanced pond and stream area. At both Hardy and Redondo, there will be new ADA accessible play equipment and ramps. Phase II will also include the completion of the greenbelt from Clifton to Cavour Streets (by the DMV) with a new pathway and native plantings.

Barring any major obstacles, construction should be completed by the end of July. In addition to the funds contributed by Councilmember Jane Brunner, Measure DD, and the City's ADA Fund, many neighborhood residents, businesses and others have contributed to these long-awaited improvements, including most recently City Council President Ignacio de la Fuente. Many thanks to all for making Phase II happen.

The FROG Steering Committee has worked overtime to get the most for our money and the project under way. BBI Construction, the contractor for Phase II, will begin posting the closure of work areas in early March. If you find the play structure at Hardy temporarily closed, note that the one at Redondo will remain open.

Public Art project moves ahead

Oakland artist Mark Brest van Kempen was selected last fall to complete an interpretive art project for FROG Park greenbelt. Finishing up a similar project in Seattle, Mark is now in contract with the City of Oakland's Public Art Program and is developing his design concept — periscopes focusing on and interpreting the natural and man-made elements that lie within the greenbelt. Join us for a community meeting to discuss Mark's art proposal, to be held in March or early April. Contact Jennifer Cooper, FROG Vice Chair, at 653-6581 for more information.

FROG Park Stewardship and Volunteer Program

One of the most wonderful things about FROG Park is that it is community-built and maintained. Hundreds of neighborhood volunteers came out for the Phase I build three years ago and dozens more donate valuable time and skills each month to maintain and improve the park.

There are exciting community-build elements to Phase II, including the Hardy to Clifton Landscaping and Planting Project and the Hardy Park Kiosk and Plaza build project. Also, there is always a need for volunteers for regular maintenance and educational days. To volunteer or to become a Frog Park Steward, contact the Head Bullfrog/Chief Steward/Volunteer Coordinator Howard Ferrier at hwferrier@sbcglobal.net, 653-6463. **Next Volunteer Maintenance Day is Saturday, April 22.** Also, for general information about getting involved in a project or with the FROG Committee, we meet on the second Wednesday of each month 7 pm at the Rockridge Library. Come join us.

rockridge • temescal frog friends of the greenbelt

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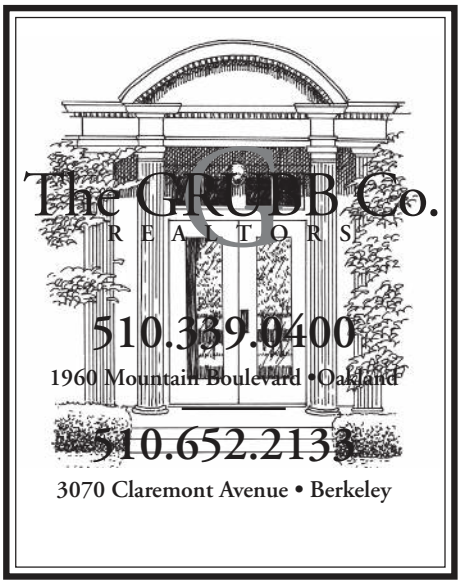
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Letters to The Editor

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

51st and Telegraph Project Needs More Review and Traffic Study

Editor:

The developers of the 51st and Telegraph condominium complex have not listened to over 500 neighbors who signed a petition requesting the height of the proposed six story complex be lowered. It is true that the developers worked with a neighborhood group to improve their plans by continuing the greenbelt and lowering the height of one of the four buildings by a few feet on Clarke Street. They have also offered to lower the main building on the Telegraph corner from 65 feet to 61 feet. Four feet is simply not enough.

Come to the City Council meeting Tuesday, March 21, 7 pm. We will appeal to the Council to overturn the Planning Commission's approval of this 67-unit project, and suggest the following changes:

1. Lower the height of the 51st and Telegraph corner building to 50 feet. Our request is still significantly higher than current zoning allowances and leaves a 59 foot tall second building on the Global Entertainment side of the complex.

2. Have the developers hire a consultant to find solutions for traffic, parking and pedestrian safety issues that will certainly occur in an already congested area.

3. Ask that City Councilmember Jane Brunner form a neighborhood design review process that will provide meaningful feedback on all future developments.

Please e-mail Jane Brunner at jbrunner@oaklandnet.com to stop the construction of six story buildings in our neighborhood. For questions, call Jeff at 510/653-7190 or e-mail janellecavanagh@yahoo.com

Janelle Cavanagh
Resident of Miles at Cavour

51st and Telegraph Project Good for the Neighborhood

Editor:

I support building a big, mixed-use building at 51st and Telegraph.

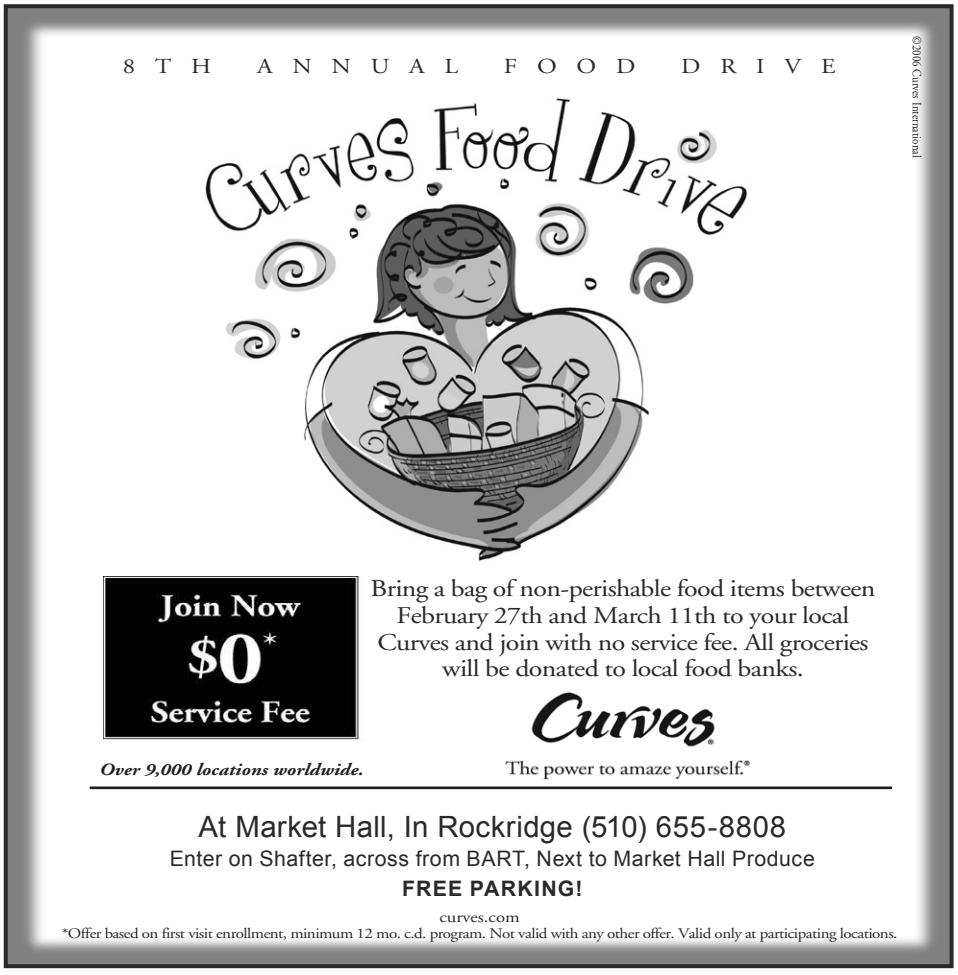
I think that the concerns of people living nearby are overblown, and that a big project like the one proposed would be good for the neighborhood. Also, it would be good for Oakland.

We all know about the enormous housing crisis in the Bay Area. Most of us are by now opposing to solving that problem by developing virgin lands for more suburban sprawl. Every environmental group and city planner talks about high-density, transit-oriented, urban infill development as the best choice. It reduces sprawl, promotes public transit, cuts air pollution and traffic congestion, and makes neighborhoods nicer to walk around. And no city is riper for urban infill than Oakland — we have more vacant lots than any other city in the region.

Every time I pass by 51st and Telegraph, the waste of that empty grassy lot makes me mad. What an incredible location! I think, what is wrong with our city that such a prime parcel is sitting empty? Now finally someone wants to take advantage of the location and offer more housing, and retail. It will help out that corner and make it more attractive. It will bring 67 units of housing to the community.

Lastly, I think concerns about parking are exaggerated. It generally turns out that the places with the hardest parking are the most attractive — because they are nicer to walk around. Look how many people go to Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, or College Avenue in Rockridge and Elmwood. The parking is tough, but the neighborhoods are vibrant. Sorry to say, they go together. The only types of places with "enough" parking for everyone are shopping malls. Rockridge isn't Emeryville, and we shouldn't want it to be. If they build a building with 67 units and limited parking, it will attract people who don't have cars — adding more pedestrians to the sidewalk, thus making the neighborhood more foot-friendly.

Joshua Sperry





Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

IT WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO TODAY; SERGEANT PEPPER TAUGHT THE BAND TO PLAY

1986

News Headlines: Challenger explodes; nuclear accident at Chernobyl; $30 million secret weapons sale to Iran; money went to Contras

Sports Headlines: Roger Clemens strikes out a record 20 batters in a row; NY Mets win World Series; NY Giants win Superbowl XXI

Entertainment Headlines: Cosby Show Number One TV show; L.A. Law wins Emmy; Platoon wins Academy Award for best picture

Economy: $0.93, gallon of gas; $0.87, dozen eggs

Rockridge Culinary Scene: six restaurants (Normans, Buttercup, Edible Complex, Rockridge Café, Zachary's and Hunan Garden), four ice cream/yogurt shops, one café/coffeehouse

2006

Today there are nearly 60 restaurants, cafes, and food specialty shops along College Avenue. In 1986, the East Bay food destination neighborhood was North Berkeley's gourmet ghetto. Over the past 20 years, Rockridge has eclipsed North Berkeley as the East Bay food Mecca. Five of the *S.F. Chronicle's* top 100 restaurants are in Rockridge: Grasshopper, Oliveto, Citron, Pearl, and À Coté. Fifteen of the 38 Oakland restaurants listed in the respected Zagat restaurant guide are on College Avenue. No other neighborhood in the Bay Area has the concentration of top-rated restaurants, cafes, and food specialty shops that Rockridge does.

How, in 20 years, did College Avenue become a nationally recognized gastronomical destination? A combination of the Rockridge BART station and the building of Market Hall created an anchor that brought food-conscious commuters to College Avenue. With the opening of Market Hall, commuters parked at the Rockridge BART and shopped at the Pasta Shop, Grace Bakery, Enzo Meats, and Paul Marcus Wine. Oliveto downstairs became a must before- or after-commute pit-stop for the perfect latte and scone or glass of wine, while upstairs quickly achieved a reputation as one of the best restaurants in the Bay Area. With the arrival of former Chez Panisse Chef Paul Bertolli at Oliveto, the gourmet ghetto shifted from North Berkeley to Rockridge.

With all the "hot" new College Avenue restaurants, cafes and bars, I most miss Norman's (now a tea shop) and the Edible Complex (now Crepevine). When we first moved into Rockridge, our family were regulars at the Edible Complex. It was child-friendly and you could always get a great bowl of soup, a salad, a two-tone cupcake or the best egg salad on a toasted bagel. Now the new family restaurant is Cactus Taqueria. It is our granddaughter's favorite place to eat. On any given evening, Cactus is jammed with families with young children. Other child-friendly restaurants include Tachibana, Pasta Pomodoro and the all-time favorite Rockridge Café.

Rockridge has come a long way in 20 years. As a community we are most fortunate to have a cornucopia of wonderful places to dine, drink fine wine and beer, or just hang out and drink coffee or tea.

This month's recipe is the signature dish from À Coté — it is fail-proof.

Steamed Mussels With Pernod

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup minced shallots
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons Pernod or other anise aperitif
- 4 pounds mussels, well scrubbed
- ¼ cup chopped Italian parsley

Heat the olive oil in a large pot over moderately high heat. Add the shallots and sauté for about 3 minutes, until softened. Add the wine and Pernod, increase the heat to high and bring to a simmer. Simmer for about 1 minute to cook off the alcohol, then add the mussels, cover and steam until the mussels open, about 3 minutes. Add the parsley and toss well. Divide the mussels and their sauce evenly among warmed serving bowls. Serve with lightly toasted sliced baguette.

Serves 4.

Barry Kaufman is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy. He is available for cooking classes. Email Barry at kaufman42@earthlink.net.

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Photo: Don Kinkead

The Neighborhood Merchant

by Theresa Nelson

Destination: Iniam

When Lisa Raja opened Iniam in May 2005, she had two concepts in mind: to open her own women's clothing store, something she had wanted to do for years, and to have a place where she can offer her own designs. The first is embodied in this gracious and delightful store, and the second will, she hopes, be coming soon.

Iniam — that's Lisa's maiden name Maini spelled backwards — provides an opportunity for Lisa to present her own ideas about contemporary women's clothing and interacting directly with customers, her favorite part of the work. Lisa lives nearby in Oakland and comes from a background in large corporate retail. She opened Iniam to offer distinctive, sophisticated clothing and accessories for a wide range of women.

The store is large and spacious, with bleached wood floors, cathedral ceilings and skylights, an ornate chandelier and a stunning circular wrought iron sculpture behind the counter. There is a large couch in the middle of the store near the spacious dressing rooms for guests who want to take a break or admire what's coming next.

The clothing is displayed to suggest colors and concept mixes. For example, the black and white rack offers a number of elements that you can tone up or down, as Lisa likes to offer clothing that can go in at least two ways. So you'll see black jackets with intriguing gold trim, stylish Nanette Lepore black piqué pants and silk tops, and a gorgeous green Bianca Nero silk halter dress to dress up the pieces.

With spring ahead, new offerings are coming into the store every day, including a fresh palette of colors with lots of neutrals, chocolates, creams, greens and other brights. For example, if you're going to an outdoor wedding, consider a sophisticated dress with cream silk bodice, a jewel-trimmed empire waist and green chiffon skirt below.

A large central table offers jeans from Chip & Pepper, Paper Denim, Red Engine, and Gold Sign, an assortment ranging from lower to higher rise, and curvy or straight fits. Also offered are supple cashmere sweaters in sky blue, pale pink, orange sherbet, lime green, black and soft tan; and in v-neck, jewel neck and cardigan styles. Lisa carries pieces from many designers, including Nanette Lepore, Trina Turk, Theory, Jones Perse, Tocca, Vince, and Tom K. Nguyen.

Iniam also offers a range of accessories. Hip belts are available in true leather colors with decorations and cutouts. The scarves from India feature silk-wool blends and pure silks in bright colors and contemporary patterns. A rolling carry-on bag in deep burgundy or warm tan from Gogoleather will carry your computer and travelwear in style.

Jewelry has a special place at Iniam. Lisa carries items from local designers like Jennifer Tuton (featured in *inStyle* magazine in February) with earrings of three gold filigree squares, and delicate metal branches with colored gemstones.

Iniam also offers a number of innovations to customers. Lisa strongly stresses the importance of customer service, offering pick-up and drop-off service, calling customers on a request list for special items and, of course, special orders. But Iniam offers even more. One of the most intriguing is the closet service. Lisa or her staff will come to your home and assess your closet, offering advice on how to put outfits together, develop a personal style using items you already own, and trim and realign your clothing selection. This service is offered by the hour, and can include multiple visits as needed.

As Lisa said, "We have such wonderful customers. Their support and enthusiasm for our products and services make coming to work each day a sincere pleasure." That's evident from the store and the attention you receive when you're shopping. Lisa surveys her customers so she can better follow their interests and style preferences. Frequent customers receive special rewards, like a 10% discount on their birthdays and awards when they reach certain purchase levels.

So stop by Iniam, let Lisa help you find that perfect something you're looking for, and enjoy her very special brand of personal service.



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"One City, One Book" Comes To Rockridge Library

Spicing up Rockridge

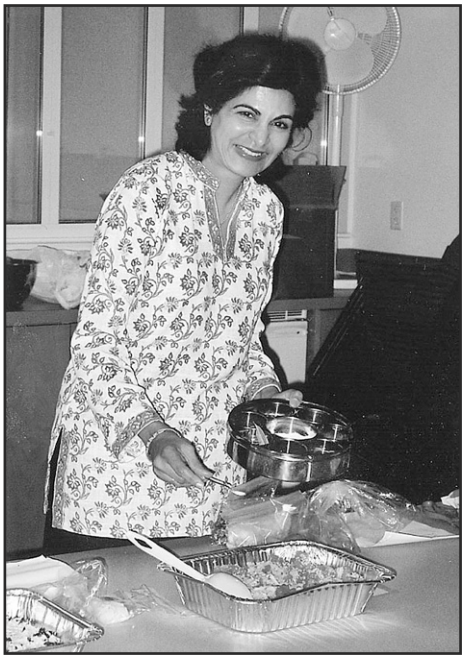
by Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig

By purchasing 250 copies of T*he Mistress of Spices* by Indian-American novelist Chitra Divakaruni, the Oakland Public Library gambled that its first celebration of the citywide program "One City, One Book" would appeal to a wide audience interested in both diversity and the world of magic realism and fantasy. The books were distributed liberally to every branch library and inspired many celebrations of Indian life.

As a partner in the festivities, the Rockridge Library enjoyed a literal "Taste of India," presented by *San Francisco Chronicle* food writer Laxmi Hiremath. This attractive and eloquent woman stirred up three beautiful dishes of popular home cooking familiar to Indian peoples, recipes for all of which are included in her book, *The Dance of Spices*. Home cooking, she explained, is quite different from the restaurant version most Americans know; it's much lighter and contains far less oil.

The lucky audience enjoyed a minty raisin rice dish and a yogurt blend of tomatoes, cucumbers, and various spices. Laxmi also prepared a form of *chaat*, (small plates of savory snacks typically served at the side of the road from stalls or carts) built on homemade popped rice with added spices.

Laxmi also shared with the audience her personal spice box, filled with seven of her favorite spices. When she travels, the spices go with her, a custom featured in the novel, *The Mistress of Spices*. The main character is commissioned, like a missionary, to transport her spices to America so that the Indian people living here will not lose the taste of their native country. Laxmi, as an Indian emissary to Rockridge, deliciously treated Rockridge to a true taste of India.



***San Francisco Chronicle* food writer Laxmi Hiremath preparing three popular Indian dishes at the Rockridge Library.**

Photo: Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig

Library Friends Seek Board Candidates for April Election

by Jennifer Vetter, Chair, FORL

Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) meets four times a year at the library, and this is an especially interesting time to get involved: We are planning several events, including an author panel, for September, 2006 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the library building on College at Manila. The group's annual election will be held at the April 20 meeting at the Rockridge Library when RCPC also elects its board of directors.

There are five open spots on the FORL Board. To place your name on the ballot, contact FORL Chair Jennifer Vetter at jrvetter@comcast.net or 595-1817. No statements, photos or speeches required. Shy and retiring bookworms are welcome.

The mission of the Friends of the Rockridge Library is to champion the Rockridge Library; to create and stimulate public enthusiasm for library programs and interest in the needs, services, and facilities of the library; to serve as advocates for the library to the community and government bodies; to generate new ideas for the enhancement of library facilities and programs; to encourage gifts and volunteers for the library; and in general, to foster the continued development of the library so that it can respond to the needs of our diverse population.

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'Light Pylons' Sculpture Approved for Studio One

by Patrick Daughton, Friends of Studio One

A major public art installation by San Francisco sculptor Cork Marcheschi has been approved for the entrance plaza of Temescal's Studio One Art Center, located at 365 45th Street. The artist's final design was vetted in February by the Oakland City Council, following the results of a January neighborhood survey initiated by Councilmember Jane Brunner.

The approval is the culmination of a process that began over a year ago with 51 proposals from artists all across the country plus many public meetings, community workshops and artist refinements.

Though fabrication of the work will soon begin, residents must wait until late 2007 to view the completed sculptures. Installation will occur only after the $12 million renovation of the Studio One Building, expected to take 18 months, is near completion. Renovation and the sculpture installation are funded by Measure DD, the Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks Bond of 2002.

Studio One, page 18

The image at right depicts the design of the lighted pylon sculptures only and may not represent the final architectural design of the Studio One building. More details in accompanying story.

Graphic supplied by Cork Marcheschi and Oakland Cultural Arts Dept.



A New College for Downtown Berkeley

Berkeley's venerable Vista College will be rechristened Berkeley City College when the Peralta College system opens its newest facility on Center Street later this year. The new building will contain all the amenities of a multi-acre campus, from bookstore to cafeteria, within a single 165,000 sq. ft. structure.

The building features a central six-story atrium with a skylight to bring natural light into an urban enclosure.

— Cy Gulassa, Peralta College Trustee



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THE Rockridge MUSE

by Claire Isaacs Warhaftig

Wee Pals' Morrie Turner Holds Court at Rockridge Library

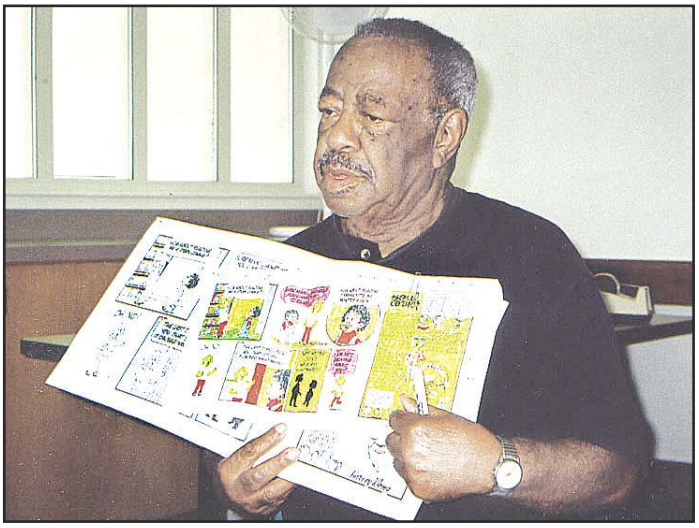
Pioneer African-American cartoonist wows kids

It was truly a "soul corner" at the Rockridge Library Saturday, February 4, when pioneering cartoonist and Oakland native Morrie Turner met with a lively group of children and adults to discuss his artwork and his life. Turner was the first African-American cartoonist to be syndicated and was at the library to celebrate Black History Month.

"Black History Month," said Turner, with a barely perceptible wink, "used to be Black History WEEK! It started on February 12 and ended after a week. Why?" he asked slyly. Finally, it dawned on those present that the ending date was not a second day honoring George Washington, but rather the birthday of the great black antislavery crusader Frederick Douglass, who advised President Abraham Lincoln. Some time later the "Week" evolved into a "Month."

When, back in 1964, Turner created his cartoon "Wee Pals," it was the first to feature black characters. Since then he has added children of all races and ethnicities — the first integrated cartoon ever. Hispanic, Asian, Caucasian even Jewish characters — 27 in all — people his strip. For example, he added Trinh, the Vietnamese boy, after a trip to Vietnam with a group of cartoonists in 1969. He is now considering adding an Arabic character. "It's a very serious matter, and I really have to think it through carefully," he said.

In later years, Turner added a feature called "Soul Corner" to serve as the "drop-out" panel required in Sunday comics. The panel can be eliminated or kept, depending on page composition. Turner features blacks and other minorities whose accomplishments are significant, but not generally well-known. "I seldom feature entertainers and sports figures," he said, "because they already get a lot of publicity." He is more likely to draw and include information about a statesman, inventor, scientist, public educator, astronaut, architect or humantarian. He has published a book, *Super Sistahs*, which also features comic strips and "Soul Corners" about minority women.



Cartoonist MorrieTurner presented his art and discussed the creative process in a recent visit to the Rockride Library.

PHOTO: CLAIRE ISAACS WARHAFTIG

The gathering was a wonderful opportunity to meet with an unusally gifted man who, as a child, didn't realize he was an artist; he just loved to make pictures. He'd talk the butcher out of some extra paper so he could draw. And he loved the old radio shows, like "The Shadow," "Inner Sanctum," "Green Hornet," and "The Whistler." While listening, Turner would draw the characters in these stories as he pictured them in his imagination.

From time to time at the library, Turner would stop talking and invite one of the children up to pose. He'd whip out a very charming cartoon sketch of the child and take one characteristic of him or her, for example: dancer, flyer, and so forth, to create an identity for the child. These lucky ones left the library with their prized and signed original sketches clutched proudly.

Turner, who nows lives in Berkeley, attended both Oakland's McClymonds High School and Berkeley High but had very little formal artistic training. He was a great fan of Milton Canniff, whose "Terry and the Pirates" and "Steve Canyon" action adventure comics were omnipresent for many years in the mid-20th Century. He wrote to Caniff and received a six page reply, which boosted his confidence and started him on his career. He also was friendly with Charles Schulz of "Peanuts" fame, who encouraged him to draw children. However, he decided that African-American children needed characters of their own, The strip first

Wee Pals, page 16



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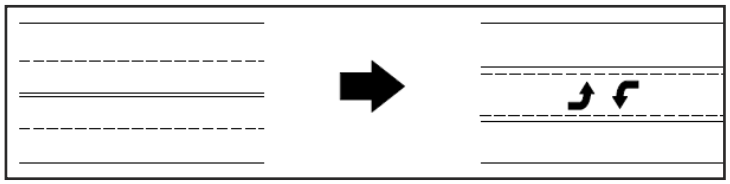
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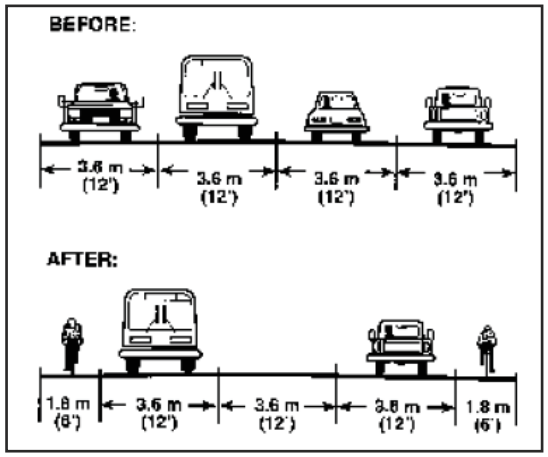
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Lane reduction design possibilities are shown at right in overhead and below right in section view.



Traffic Plans

from page 1



to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and calm traffic along Upper Broadway between Highway 24 and College Avenue.

As part of the Bicycle Plan initiatives, traffic studies will be conducted to determine the feasibility of a bicycle corridor along Upper Broadway all the way into downtown. For more information on the Oakland Bicycle Master plan, contact Jason Patton (jpatton@oaklandnet.com) or visit the City of Oakland website (http://www.oaklandpw.com/page123.aspx).

According to Patton and the TPBS Committee, plans for Upper Broadway, could include:

- Reducing the number of traffic lanes from 4 to 3 (1 lane in each direction, with a center turn lane)
- Adding bicycle lanes on both sides of the street
- Keeping the existing on-street parking, but eliminating parking within 10 feet of the intersections to prevent parked cars from obstructing the vision of drivers turning onto Broadway from side streets)
- Adding high-visibility crosswalks at each of the intersections
- A stoplight at the Lawton intersection to ease traffic and pedestrian issues.

Similar mitigations have been implemented on Berkeley's Marin Avenue, with encouraging results. Heath Maddox, a former Rockridge resident and associate transportation planner for Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs for Berkeley, presented an update on the Marin Avenue project and said that even residents who were strongly opposed to the project during the planning phase now agree there have been few negative effects from the lane reduction. In fact, he said, overall traffic flow and pedestrian and bicycle safety effects have been positive.

In addition to Upper Broadway, the TPBS Committee will focus on traffic calming/volume reduction options for Colby Street and pedestrian safety concerns along Claremont Avenue, and will address other problem areas in Rockridge.

To participate in this committee, attend the next meeting on March 8, 7 pm, at the Rockridge Library, or join the Yahoo Group. E-mail your contact information to: Rockridge_Traffic_and_Pedestrian_Bicycle_Safety-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Community Calendar Note

Many of these same issues will be addressed at Councilmember Brunner's Community Advisory Meeting on Saturday, April 1. Rockridge residents will be asked to consider whether North Oakland wants Berkeley-style traffic controls. See the Community Calendar on page 19 for details about meeting time and place.

Brunner Meeting

from page 6

How effective is the investigative arm of OPD? The Chief admitted that OPD prioritizes its investigations, committing most of its investigative resources to violent crimes. However, resources are meager. There are three assault investigators and two robbery investigators for the whole city. With only one burglary investigator, the department is not equipped to follow leads like fingerprints. One frustrated victim of an armed robbery in his own home recounted that he was told that the prints lifted at the crime scene would take 4-6 months to process.

The Riders case has consumed a significant amount of department resources. In September 2003, after the longest criminal trial in county history, a jury acquitted three OPD officers of eight charges relating to assaults on people, falsifying police reports and conspiring to obstruct justice while patrolling West Oakland in 2000; and deadlocked on the remaining 27 charges.

Meanwhile, the department was sued civilly, and the resulting settlement imposed reforms on police conduct. Chief Tucker has instituted 46 of the 51 reforms mandated by the settlement, but, according to OPD reports, 30 officers have been reassigned to internal affairs to achieve this goal. Don Link, Chair of the city's Community Policing Advisory Board, said he thought the Negotiated Settlement Agreement was being "overzealously enforced," hampering the work of the officers and generating too many nuisance complaints.

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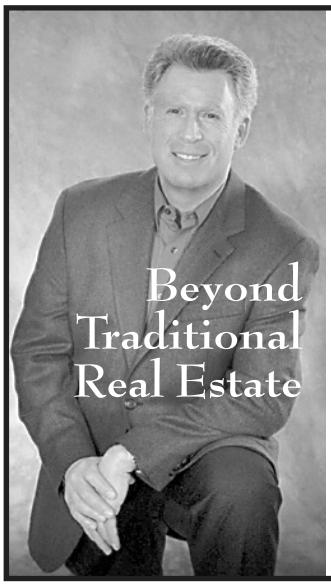
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RE: The RCPC Town Hall Meeting

Identity Theft

from page 1

of its nature, identity theft is difficult to detect and hard to fight. What can citizens do to protect themselves? You can find out at the RCPC Town Hall meeting March 16, 7 pm, when RCPC will host presentations and a question and answer period featuring the Secret Service, Postal Inspectors and Oakland Police at the Rockridge Branch Library. Credit card fraud, mail theft and forgery as related to identity theft will be discussed. Should you be concerned about identity theft? Consider this: The Council of Better Business Bureaus and Javelin Strategy and Research studied 5,000 consumers, more than 500 of whom were identity theft victims. While the median value of the fraud for this study was just $422, it took victims about 40 hours of work to resolve. Approximately one-third of perpetrators were identified; 15 percent of the identified perpetrators were co-workers. You can learn more before the meeting: The Federal Trade Commission maintains a web site to educate and aid consumers. Visit http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft/ for more information and identify theft prevention tips.



Wee Pals

from page 13

appeared in 1965 in the Oakland Tribune, Philadelphia Bulletin and L.A Times, but was slow to spread; most papers were not about to publish such a radical new comic strip, a black comic strip. However, after Martin Luther King was assassinated, the comic's circulation quickly grew to 110 newspapers nationwide. "I hated to think I gained from Martin's death," Turner said sadly, "but in fact, there was so much interest then that I became popular." One can find his work today in the Oakland Tribune, with his familiar children arguing and debating charmingly.

Asked what he thinks about Aaron McGruder's comic, "Boondocks," a very contemporary, hip view of the black experience, he replied that he enjoys it, although its direction is very different.

Morrie Turner was an ideal visitor to help celebrate Black History Month at the Rockridge branch library. He is a man who, one feels, has seen it all. He has an amiable surface, but underneath is a wry, sophisticated, knowing quality. Chatting with him was an opportunity to learn a bit of real history directly from a person who made some.

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Rockridge Real Estate Stays Solid

by Ortrun Niesar

Rockridge real estate values reached new heights in 2005. The number of single family homes sold was 125, about normal for Rockridge; but the overall median price for a Rockridge home topped out at $930,500, up 15.6% from $805,000 in 2004. Sales were brisk, particularly in the second and third quarters where sellers and buyers experienced strong competition resulting in an average 11% overbidding.

The median price for a 2-bedroom bungalow was $805,000, versus $707,000 the year before, representing a jump of 14%. For a 3-bedroom home the median price reached $925,000, up from $805,000 or 15% over 2004. The number of homes sold at over $1,000,000 in Rockridge was 43, about the same as 2004, but proportionately this represented 34% of the entire inventory, up from 25% the year before. Figures such as these never tell the entire story, but taken in context with other statistics, they serve as good value indicators.

The median price per square foot for all homes sold was $527, and the average price per square foot was very close at $530. For real estate market analysis, price per square foot is calculated by dividing the sale price by the number of square feet in your home. It does not take into consideration attributes such as the condition of your home, the current market or the size and location of the lot. Therefore, you will note that the smaller the home you are purchasing, the higher the price per square foot will be. In Rockridge the 2005 average price per square foot for a 2-bedroom home was $605, and $522 for a 3-bedroom home. The median prices per square foot were $622 and $539 respectively.

The overall median price for a Rockridge home topped out at $930,500, up 15.6% from $805,000 in 2004.

Outlook for 2006

Now for the rest of the story. As strong as overall sales were in 2005, Rockridge apparently is not entirely convinced that it will be immune from current changes in the real estate market. In the fourth quarter of 2005 Rockridge prices had already dipped slightly overall, about 4%, and offers over asking price capped at an average of 5.6%. Nevertheless, sales were strong, and nearly matched the third quarter. Sales for the first quarter of 2006 seem to have stalled more than normally for this time of year. November and December were extremely quiet, heralding a slow first quarter. Analysts are citing uncertainty about the rise in mortgage interest rates and the correction expected in an overheated real estate market.

Rockridge residents do not believe that we are going to be greatly affected by this situation. A mild leveling off in aggressive pricing will happen.

There is no doubt in anyone's mind that there will be a more reserved real estate market, one where there will be greater balance between the bargaining strength of buyers and sellers. Sale prices, however, will continue to stay strong; a sharp drop in prices is generally connected to an economic downturn, a situation that is not anticipated here. Further, there continues to be more demand than supply for homes in our neck of the woods.

How will we fare overall? There is currently too little inventory to be able to test the waters effectively. Spring will tell the story.

Ortrun Niesar is a Realtor with Prudential California: ortrun.niesar@prurealty.com



Rockridge Home Sale Prices 2002-2005

Year	Avg. Price	% Change	Median Price	%Change
2002	770,604		691,500	
2003	847,637	9.9	750,000	8.5
2004	902,000	6.4	805,000	7.3
2005	1,032,139	14.4	930,500	15.6

This analysis covers Rockridge homes sales from the Berkeley border in the north, south to Broadway Terrace and 51st Street, west to Colby and east to Highway 13. Information supplied by EBRD 2006 is deemed to be reliable but not guaranteed.

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Rockridge History

from page 5

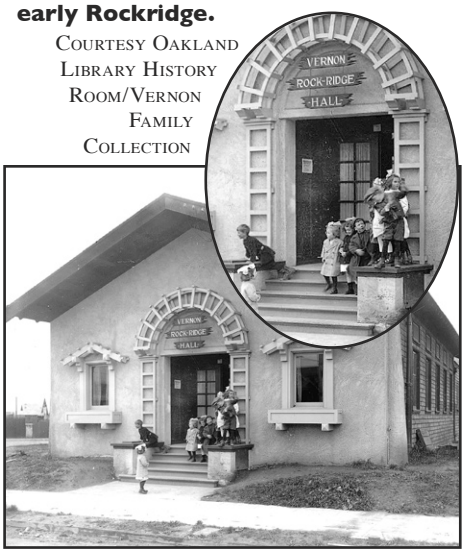
tives, RCPC, with the aid of *The Rockridge News,* helped organize the drive for kid's playgrounds, a dog park and the greenbelt known as FROG Park. RCPC is also active in reviewing and commenting on land-use applications for commercial properties in Rockridge, representing the community's interests.

Then and Now

Looking back, Rockridge has always been a wonderful neighborhood in which to live. It is an inclusive neighborhood, with an almost equal representation of renters and owners; it also welcomes visitors to the Avenue with open arms. There are residents with multi-generational ties here, and residents who moved in yesterday… and all are here for the same reasons: great housing, great shopping and dining, great commute and great neighbors. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Children playing on the steps of the Vernon Rock-Ridge Hall in early Rockridge.

Courtesy Oakland Library History Room/Vernon Family Collection



Studio One

from page 12

Marcheschi's design (shown in the graphic to the right of the story on page 12) consists of six lighted pylon sculptures, each about 10 feet tall and arranged in two rows flanking the landscaped "front yard" of the art center. They will be constructed of stainless steel plate and a rugged dichroic glass and translucent safety glass laminate. Each pylon, using minimal electricity, will be softly lit by a low-power xenon light source.

By day the dichroic glass exterior will reflect and refract a wide range of subtle colors, the aspect of which will vary largely according to the vantage point of the viewer. By night the sculptures, illuminated from the inside and equipped with separate controllers, will display gradually changing colors independent of one another. According to Marcheschi, the night time glow from each pylon, though insufficient to read by, will offer illumination about equivalent to a 40-watt lightbulb beneath a parchment shade.

Marcheschi, an accomplished artist who exhibits internationally, has for 25 years been creating large-scale public art with an emphasis on the use of light. He earned his MFA in Sculpture at nearby California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of the Arts) and maintains a studio (www.corkmarcheschi.com) in San Francisco.

Studio One, is the Oakland Parks and Recreation public arts education facility and regularly conducts over 100 classes for children, youth and adults in the studio arts, as well as in health and fitness. Classes are temporarily disbursed to the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts (http://www.oaklandnet.com/parks/facilities/rc_studioone.asp) and other recreation centers in Oakland.

To follow developments around the building's renovation, or to learn more about the history and role of Studio One in our community, visit Friends of Studio One at http://www.friendsofstudioone.org/.

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E-mail *Rockridge News* Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210 (after noon), 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

April 1 topic: **How Should North Oakland Solve its Traffic Problems?** Meetings: first Saturday every other month, 10am to noon. Peralta Elementary School: 460 63rd St. (parking on Alcatraz Ave., above Telegraph). For more information on all District One issues or events, 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. Meets 3rd Tuesday each month, 7 to 8:30pm at California College of the Arts (CCA), 5212 B'way (at College Ave.), Bldg. B-4. Directions and more information: www.rockridgencpc.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

FOR CHILDREN:

- **Toddler Story Time**: 1st and 2nd Saturdays, 10:30am: 3/4, 3/11,4/1, 4/8.
- **Pre-School Story Time**: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am: 3/15,4/5.
- **Pajama Story Time**: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7pm: 3/14, 3/28.
- SPECIAL EVENT FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES: **Royal Rumpus**: Stories and crafts by Pam Brown, all about Kings and Queens. Tuesday, April 4 at 7pm. Presented as part of National Library Week. Best for ages 3 to 10, but all ages welcome.

FOR TEENS:

- **Bookwormz (Teen-Led Book Club):** third Saturday of each month (3/18) from 1 to 2pm in upstairs mtg. room For any questions, call Susy, the teen specialist librarian at 597-5017.
- **Anime Club:** Watch and talk about new anime (Japanese animation) with other teens. 2nd Tuesday of each month (3/14, 4/11) from 5 to 6:30pm, in the upstairs mtg. room.

FOR ADULTS:

- **Knitting Classes for Seniors (50+):** All levels welcome. If you are a beginner, bring light color yarn and a pair of size 8 needles. If experienced, bring projects to work on. Tuesdays: 3/7, 3/14, 3/28, from 12:30 to 2:30pm. Instructor is Teri Barr.
- **Book Signing with local authors Annalee Allen and Erika Mailman**. Saturday, March 25th from 2 to 4:30pm.
- **Lawyers in the Library:** Free legal advice. First Tuesday of each month: 6pm to 8pm. Advance sign-up starts 5pm.

ART EXHIBITS:

- **Gallery**: In March: **Fraser Rotchford:** acrylic and oil paintings. In April: **Susan Hall**: watercolor plus oil and acrylic on canvas.
- **Display case**: In March: **Laura Grossman**: environmental art. In April: **Betty La Cuse**: paintings (for the non-profit Heifer Project).

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

Library Hours:

Monday and Tuesday, 12:30 to 8pm.
Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday 10am to 5:30pm
Friday, 12 to 5:30pm
Closed Sundays.

Diesel Book/Poetry Events

All events are FREE and open to the public

- Tuesday, 3/14, 7:30pm. **Book Club #3**: Discussion of *Motherless Brooklyn* by Jonathan Lethem. All welcome.

5433 College Ave. For more information about other readings, book discussion groups and El Grupito, the Spanish discussion group: 510-653-9965 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 from (3/18), 1 to 5pm. For more information: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.

Book Signing

Lachu Moorjani: of Berkeley's Ajanta restaurant, will sign his new book, *Ajanta: Regional feasts of India.* Will include tastings of ingredients and recipes, as part of the Pasta Shop's 3 week celebration of foods and flavors from India. Friday, March 10, from noon to 2pm. The Pasta Shop, Market Hall, 5655 College Ave. For more information: 547-4005 or www.pastashop.net.

Chabot Elementary School PTA Annual Spring Auction

Fundraiser for enrichment programs: art, music, garden, computers, bldg. improvements. "Brazilian Carnival" theme with food/drinks, live music and both live and silent auction. Great prizes from local merchants. Pauley Ballroom on the UC Campus on Saturday, March 25, 6 to 11pm. Ticket prices: $26 (in advance) or $30 at the door. Purchase tickets online at www.chabotelementary.org. For more information, contact Susie Poncelet at 985-1246, or sponcelet@earthlink.net

Sick Plant Clinic

Bring your ailing plants to the University of California Botanical Garden and get a **free diagnosis** by UC plant pathologist Dr. Robert Raabe, UC entomologist Dr. Nick Mills and their team of experts. First Saturday of every month from 9am to noon. No registration necessary. 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 $2.00. Every Wednesday, from 9:30am to 1:30pm. For details about upcoming field trips, call Kathy at 531-6724.

College Ave. Presbyterian Church, 5955 College

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 class schedule and monthly lunch menu: (suggested donation: seniors age 60 + $2.25; $4 under age 60). Call 597- 5085 for details about membership, newsletter, classes/events and opportunities to become a volunteer.

Volunteers Needed

- **Bambino Thrift Shop**: All Volunteer Shop benefiting Oakland Children's Hospital. Volunteers needed Tuesdays through Saturdays. We will train you to help with pricing, selling and merchandise display. 5290 College Ave. Call manager, Carol Maes: 654-9709.
- **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.
- **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. (at Colby). Contact Julia Kassissieh, Director: 655-0540 or director@noccs.org.
- **Friends of Temescal Creek (FOTC)**: Monitor water quality by collecting water samples at Lake Temescal for analysis. Important for Rockridge residents because Temescal Creek runs above-ground near FROG Park. Volunteers meet the 3rd Saturday of each month, 10am to noon. Regular commitment preferred. For information and location, contact fotc2005@yahoo.com.
- **HEROES:** is the volunteer placement program for the Oakland Unified School District that helps enhance the quality of educational experiences for students in the Oakland public schools. To volunteer, call 879-2908 or www.oaklandheroes.org.

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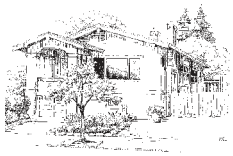
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