# THE Rockridge News

20th Year

www.rockridge.org

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*Gala Anniversary Celebration Planned for Fall*

## The Making of the Rockridge Library

*by Jennifer Vetter, Friends of the Rockridge Library*

This September, the Rockridge Library, one of the most popular in the Oakland system, will mark its tenth anniversary with a gala celebration. More than a collection of books, the library is the soul and center of Rockridge, a symbol of what a neighborhood can do if it has the wisdom to dream and the will to achieve. The story of its birth is as much the story of Rockridge itself: how a small organization and a few visionary leaders mobilized the community to work for the common good.



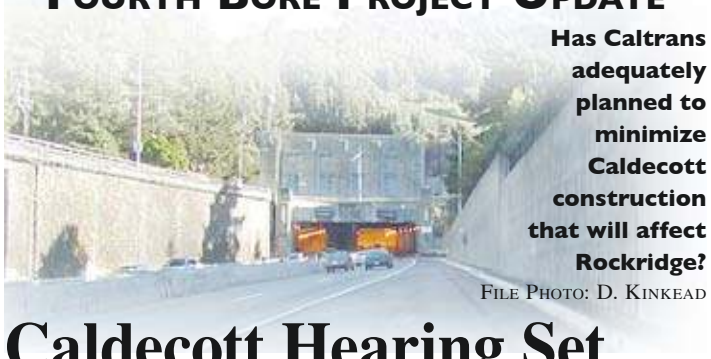
**In 1996, ready-to-be readers attending the library's grand opening enjoy the new surroundings and wait for books to arrive on the empty shelves.**
PHOTO: DON KINKEAD

When Nancy Dutcher joined the RCPC in 1986, then-chair Barbara Anderson said, "Everyone on the Board has to take on a project." Nancy chose the library as her project and volunteered to help with a survey of library users. No one knew that the fortunes of the library were about to change dramatically.

The Rockridge Branch Library had been housed since 1924 in the building on the corner of College and Miles Avenues where Jucy's is now

➧ **Library Celebrates, page 13**

**FOURTH BORE PROJECT UPDATE**



**Has Caltrans adequately planned to minimize Caldecott construction that will affect Rockridge?**
FILE PHOTO: D. KINKEAD

## Caldecott Hearing Set For June 15; City Funds Independent Evaluation

*by Kent Deverell, RCPC Board Member*
*Co-Chair, Fourth Bore Coalition*

On May 12, Caltrans released the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the planned addition of a fourth bore to the Caldecott Tunnel. Five years of 24/7 construction is slated to begin as early as 2008. Public hearings will soon be held in Orinda and Oakland (see box at right). Residents are encouraged to attend, ask questions, and voice their opinions.

### Mitigating Project Impacts

Since February 2005, the Fourth Bore Coalition, a group of neighborhood associations, businesses, and local citizens on the western side of the tunnel, has worked with politicians and organizations to ensure that the project is environmentally, economically and socially respon-

**DEIR Hearings**
*(Both meetings: Open house– 6pm; Public comment– 7pm)*
**Orinda Meeting:** June 8, Orinda Community Center, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda.
**Oakland Meeting:** June 15, Claremont Middle School, 5750 College, Oakland.
*On-line copies of the DEIR:* http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/caldecott/draft_ea_eir.htm.

➧ **Caldecott Bore, page 10**



**FROG Park improvements take shape. Story page 6**

**Town Hall Meeting**

**Thursday, June 22, 7:30 pm: Rockridge Library Community Room, 5366 College Avenue at Manila**

■ **BART Plaza Improvement Strategies; An In-Person Look**

If you've ever used the Rockridge BART station, ask yourself these three questions:

- Have you ever wished you'd spent a few more minutes on College Avenue instead of on the cold, windy BART platform waiting for a delayed train?
- Have you ever wondered what kind of beady-eyed varmints live in the ivy groves in the station courtyard?
- Have you ever wished there were more security lights as you dug in your backpack for car keys?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then your voice should be heard. Join RCPC at our June Town Hall meeting, focusing on strategies to reduce the concrete "blight" of the BART plaza.

➧ **Town Hall, page 9**

# My Day at Oakland Tech

*by Andrew Swanson, Oakland Tech Student*

My day begins with the loud, startlingly annoying beeping of my alarm clock. It is set for six-oclock, and I have to go to bed earlier than most so that I have enough energy to even get up. After swiftly getting dressed, I often sit down and watch the morning news. I don't know about my compatriots, but I like to be kept updated on some things in my community. In any case, I don't eat much for breakfast, except some fruit. After I'm packed and ready, I head off to school.

My first stop is "*mi clase de Español*" (Spanish class). The teacher is very enthusiastic, which is good, but such optimism doesn't always have an effect on a brain that is half conscious. We take notes every day, practice speaking the language, and do bookwork.



**Oakland Tech student Andrew Swanson.**

Photo: Andrew Swanson

After that, I go down to my P.E class. We've been doing many different activities

➧ My Day at Tech, page 8

# Extra Cops Helpful But Crime Persists

*by Susan Montauk, NCPC Chair and RCPC Board Member*

At the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (GRNCPC) May meeting, Sergeant LeRonne Armstrong (Problem Solving Officer Commander) said that an additional 24 patrol officers have been deployed in Oakalnd, 14 during the dogwatch shift (5 pm-3 am). The extra officers are the City's emergency response to the fact that the murder rate from January through March doubled in comparison with last year. Rookie officer Aisha Stevens told the audience that her group of 19 new graduates were given their assignments and she is very excited about her new job. This puts the number of OPD officers closer to the goal of full staffing (739) required by Measure Y.

The extra police are a boon to the understaffed Oakland force. After experiencing three months of soaring crime from January to March, Oakland citizens formed community groups to decry the shortage of police officers. With media highlighting the crimes and citizens demonstrating at City Hall, OPD Chief Tucker and the City Council were hard-pressed for solutions. They worked with the police union to put more cops on the street by juggling work schedules. But long-term solutions are lacking, especially for how to attract applicants to the training academies and encourage them to stay in Oakland once they graduate. Historically, many Oakland graduates have gone elsewhere to find jobs.



➧ NCPC, page 10

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*Sunday:* **CLOSED**
Also Closed: July 4
**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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- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

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**Publication date of the next issue is**
**☛ July 3, 2006**
**☛ July deadline is June 22.**

**Advertising rates are $26/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.)***

# New College Avenue Benches Installed, Tested





**Shortly after Ian Read (above, left) and Erol Yildiz of Oakland's Level Four Studio installed one of the new benches on College Avenue, an eager pedestrian, left, and her companion tested it for comfort and shade.**

PHOTOS: MIKE MACDONALD

*by Mike McDonald, RCPC Board Member*

You may have noticed a few additional places to sit on College Avenue lately, as the first phase of the College Avenue Bench and Tree project, sponsored and paid for by Councilmember Jane Brunner's office, has been completed.

More than 90 of the custom stainless steel and IPE (Brazilian Hardwood) benches have been installed by Oakland's Level Four Studio, LLC, a design/fabrication firm. Several dozen more benches will be installed when sidewalk repair along College Avenue is completed. Also, up to 50 new trees will be planted along College Avenue.

In late 2004, Brunner alerted the community that she had procured City "Pay Go" funds for capital improvements along College Avenue and wished to know how the community wanted to use these funds. The College Avenue Bench and Tree project was the result of months of planning sessions with the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), the Rockridge District Association (RDA) and Brunner's office.

Many thanks are owed to Brunner's office and to the hardworking folks at RCPC and the RDA for making this project happen. The RDA has agreed to maintain the benches and monitor safety and repair issues. RCPC and the RDA will play an ongoing role in bringing additional improvements to College Avenue and the neighborhood. Stay tuned specifically for exciting news regarding improvements at the under-BART plazas.

See you on the Avenue!

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# Earthquake Retrofit Planned For Rockridge BART Station

*by Steve Meyer, RCPC Board Member*

According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), there is a 62% probability of at least one earthquake with a magnitude of 6.7 or greater in the next 30 years in the Bay Area. That's why BART's top priority is an earthquake safety program. Upgrades and retrofits are essential to minimize serious damage to elevated tracks that cross or are close to major faults.

Early this year, spokespersons Molly McArthur and Catherine Westphal described to the RCPC Board the scope of the program and its impact on the neighborhood. Measure AA, passed in 2004, along with other state and local sources, provide the funds for the 10-year $1.3B retrofit.

In Rockridge, work will consist mainly of seismic retrofits to the structural columns that support the overhead rails. The plan is to excavate around the base of the vertical supports, install new footings, strengthen foundations, and wrap steel "jackets" around columns. Expect lots of work around the Rockridge BART Station and Hardy Park. BART also plans to improve the structural integrity of the escalators, staircases, and canopies at the Rockridge station.

The project is now in the planning phase, with actual construction tentatively scheduled to start in late 2007. Each aerial support will require several months for completion, with work likely being done on just one column at a time, each of which will require temporary closure of about 20 BART parking spaces. Portions of the dog run and basketball courts at Hardy Park will likely be closed off for those months as well. In addition to noise, dust and mud, other temporary impacts include relocation of bus stops, sidewalk closings, street parking restricted, and possible traffic diversion lanes along Hudson and other nearby streets. BART promises to minimize these inconveniences and keep residents up to date on progress.

RCPC will work with BART to expedite the retrofit and clean-up. Watch for updates in *The Rockridge News.*

# Wheels Turning at Peralta

*by Hiroko Kurihara, RCPC Boardmember and Proud Peralta Parent*

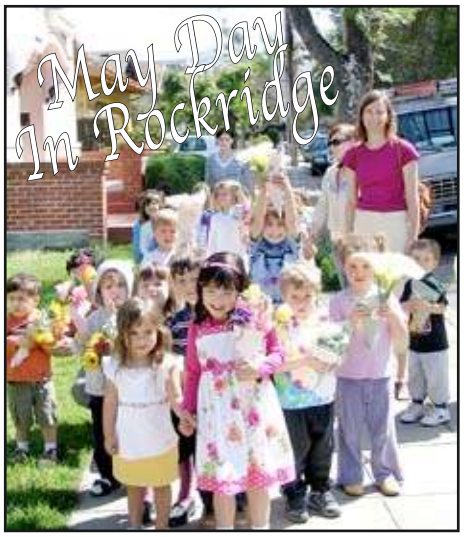
May was National Bike Month, and Thursday, May 18, marked the Bay Area's 12th annual Bike to Work Day. In addition to helping promote bicycling as a healthy and fun way to get around, Peralta Elementary School encouraged families to walk, scooter, bus, carpool, or skate to school.

There are about 150 students at Peralta; we saw 65% of our kids get into the spirit. Neighborhood locations hosted families who live too far to bike. About a week before, lots of kids participated in a bike safety class presented by bike safety guru Ron Bishop. Thank you, Ron. And thank you, students and families and friends who helped make it happen.



**Bicycles packed Peralta School bicycle parking lots on Bike to Work Day in May.**

Photo: Hiroko Kurihara

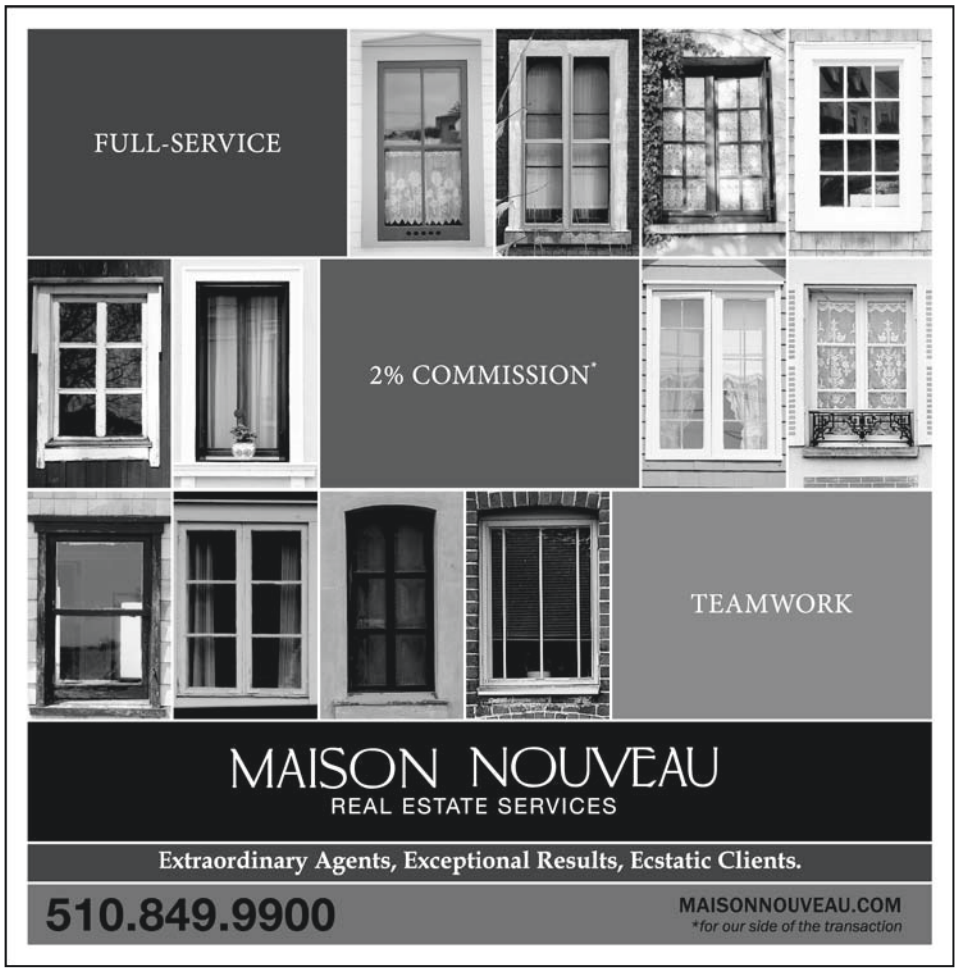



**Children of Rockridge's My Own Montessori School delivering May Baskets to neighbors on May Day, May 1.**

Photo: Delia Burdeyney





# Impressions of Israel: 1956 – 2006

*by Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig*

In March of 1956, it took nearly three weeks for me to reach Israel via train, ship and boat. This March, 2006, I flew to Israel in Business Class and was in Tel Aviv in less than 24 hours.

My recent trip offered a unique opportunity to compare my experiences of a half century ago, as a young girl on an exciting adventure, with my mature reflections of life in Israel today.

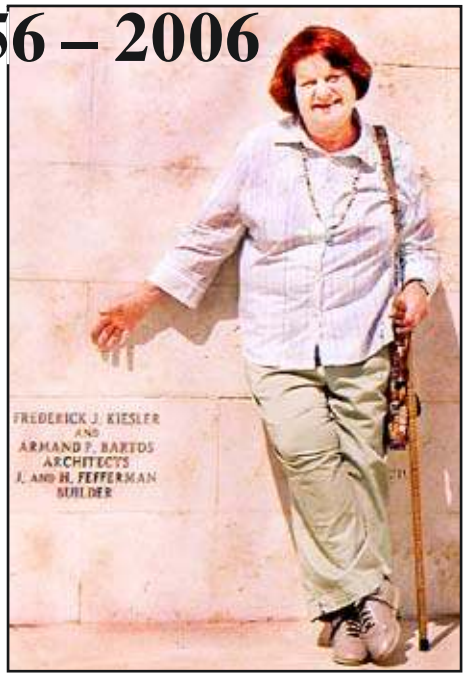
Fifty years ago, Israel was less a 20th-century country than a 19th-century outpost. Because private phones were scarce, one was welcome to drop in on friends without notice. Hardly anyone owned cars; busses were the main form of transportation. One also shared cabs, but I preferred hitchhiking. Once I rode with five Arab men who found this red-haired Jewish girl quite a curiosity. Such travel is unthinkable today; cars clot the streets and highways and many ride the speedy new Tel Aviv-Haifa train, which will soon be joined by a Tel Aviv-Jerusalem line.

Media in Israel in 1956 consisted of Kol Yisrael, the Voice of Israel Broadcasting. I could walk anywhere and hear the nightly news broadcast or even the opening concert at the new Tel Aviv Symphony Hall echoing throughout the streets. For the latest American pop songs, I tuned in Radio Ramallah in nearby Jordan and listened to Arabic-accented English. Today Israelis have more cell phones per capita than Americans, and people ardently follow their favorite European soccer and basketball leagues on cable TV. Where conversation once concerned crops and weather, high tech is the talk of today, the economic engine of 21st-century Israel.

The face of the land has changed dramatically. Empty stretches of road from Haifa to Tel Aviv are now filled with construction, and ugly high tension lines disfigure the blue sky views I remember. Lush farms and villages cover once open land. I was startled to see that Jerusalem's old hills, which I remembered as exposed, weathered and brown, were now green with forests, as if the hills around Bakersfield had changed into the Sierra. The Dead Sea, where I once was lucky to find a bottle of orange juice to drink and a cave to cool off in, is now a resort with air-conditioned, five-star hotels where Europeans come to cure themselves of skin diseases in the amazing Salton waters. Fifty years ago my friends and I loved to picnic at the old forum at Caesarea, with its headless, toga draped statues. Nearby, a Roman aqueduct framed the Mediterranean. It was peaceful, quiet and uninhabited. Today, the town of Caesarea is a posh suburb and Herod's grand and ambitious palatial city has been exhumed. In Jerusalem, Be'it She'an and throughout the land, archeologists from many countries have revealed the past in acres upon acres of protected ruins.

The healthy but plain, unvaried food of Israel's early days has been replaced with an enormous variety of cuisines. Gone are the street vendors with their falafel and salted corn from boiling pots, the black bread, jam and thick yogurt which fed us after a day's work in the fields. Gone also are the Russian-style cafeterias, rationed coffee and kibbutz austerity. In their place are sophisticated restaurants, ethnic tastes brought into Israel by its many and diverse immigrants, accompanied by international, award-winning wine from the Golan Heights.

Adventurous architecture bursts into the skies above Tel Aviv. The new Ben Gurion Airport, with its Jerusalem limestone and giant windows, welcomes and inspires arriving travelers. The great Supreme Court building in Jerusalem is a near mystical experience of light and surface. Standing before the lovely Shrine of the Book, which houses the Dead Sea Scrolls, I recalled that 48 years ago I had taken notes when the architect and the Hebrew University President met to visualize the building and select the site.




**Claire Isaacs Wahrhaftig at the Shrine of the Book in Israel.**

PHOTO: COURTESY CLAIRE ISAACS WAHRHAFTIG

Clearly, that little pioneer country is now an advanced, modern nation. But warmth and friendliness have been replaced by hurry and anxiety. Many Israelis I met this trip were tense from the constant battle to convince the world they can and should exist. This contrasted dramatically with their hopeful attitude a half century ago. Then, the world loved and admired Israel; all believed peace would come with time. Today, Israelis are discouraged by the response from "the other side."

But there is cause for hope. One of my greatest thrills was to cross the border into Jordan for the first time, with whom Israel signed a peace treaty in 1994. I was treated with respect and kindness and could discuss Israeli-Jordan disagreements about water without rancor. I learned that Jordanians, both civilian and military, are often treated at Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital. I dream of the possibility of peace like this on all of Israel's borders — the rewards are beyond imagining.

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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.*

### Add 'Respect' to the 3 Rs

**Editor:**

On May 3, at around 4 in the afternoon, as I was walking along the sidewalk in front of the Rockridge Library, I was set upon by a group of eight to ten young people, aged about 11-13, who blocked my path, taunted me, and threw mock punches at my head. Kids can be energetic and boisterous, but this was a mob scene that could easily have degenerated into physical contact and violence. The library does not serve *in loco parentis*, and parents and schools (including the Claremont Middle School where these kids are from) are responsible for teaching kids to be respectful of themselves and others. Otherwise, our community, and these kids, will suffer.

***Bill Tilden***

### Make Claremont and College Safer for Drivers

**Editor:**

I have observed that Claremont Avenue approaching College Avenue is a magnet for irresponsible driving. If the Hazens' unfortunate accident with a speeding vehicle isn't enough reason to pay more attention on the road ("Bob Hazen…," *Rockridge News*, May 6, page 1) I would like to point out another: the danger of trying to turn left onto Claremont as you exit Safeway or the 76 gas station.

A left turn requires the driver to first cross two lanes of southbound traffic and then merge into fast-moving northbound traffic, a difficult feat at best. But the problem is compounded because the view of the exiting driver is blocked by cars parked on Claremont. To see if the road is clear, the left-turning driver must first creep dangerously forward into the traffic lane itself, then shoot across to merge into northbound traffic, the latter a maneuver with its own hazards. The truth is that none of the drivers have clear, unobstructed sight lines, creating the potential for a serious collision. I have had a couple close encounters of this type in the past few months.

To improve safety, I would urge that the faded yellow lines on Claremont be repainted and that the City install "Right Turn Only" signs at the Safeway and 76 station exits. This hopefully would reduce the potential for accidents.

***Kevin***

### Landscaping tax for what?

**Editor:**

I received my Official Property Owner Ballot and intend to oppose the proposed assessment increase for the City of Oakland Landscaping & Lighting Assessment District. I would be more than happy to support a tax for "Maintenance of city trees, landscaped areas along streets, sidewalks." However, I have lived in Rockridge for 34 years and have yet to see on my block any maintenance performed on any tree or the sidewalks that they have destroyed. What I have seen are an infestation of Hackberry Woolly Aphids, the black scum they leave on cars and sidewalks, ugly patches of asphalt attempting to smooth over cracks in sidewalks, faded marks made years ago by city workers leading people to believe that something would be done, and the three disabled people within a block of my home attempting to maneuver their wheelchairs over the Matterhorn two houses down from me.

Fortunately I have no tree in front of my house. No matter, the roots of the one next to me (the largest on the block) have twice invaded my sewer line (which undoubtedly explains why it's the largest) at considerable cost. I note with interest that the house down the block that just sold for over $1,050,000 has no tree in front. Oh, I forgot: during my time here, a streetlight was replaced. $150-$160? That's one powerful bulb!

***Pat Parker***

Letters to the Editor, page 12







# FROG Park Corner

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



## The Swings are Coming!

*by Jennifer Cooper*

Have you or your youngster spied the construction equipment? The new FROG Park pathway from Clifton to Cavour has been completed, with irrigation underway and planting to come. Construction is taking place in the Hardy Park area, with plaza and pond improvements about to start, along with the new swings, drinking fountain, and ADA play panels. Then comes the renovation of the basketball courts. Thanks to a city of Oakland grant, a new bike rack will be installed at Hardy, with another to follow in the fall. FROG is finalizing the kiosk plans and tables for the plaza, to be installed in late summer. For more information or to get involved, call Jennifer Cooper, FROG Vice-Chair, 510/653-6581. With all the warm, sunny weather, it's hard to wait for the project to be complete.

Looking to get your hands dirty? A community planting is planned for the Fall, focusing on the Greenbelt between Clifton Street and Hardy Park. Contact Volunteer Coordinator Howard Ferrier at hwferrier@sbcglobal.net, 510/653-6463.

**Art in the Park**

The public art project planned for the Greenbelt is moving ahead.

Artist Mark Brest van Kempen, an Oakland resident and recognized public artist, has developed a design that will focus on natural and man-made elements found in the park now and in the past, using a series of telescopes and a periscope. The sculptures will be located along the length of the greenbelt, and be oriented towards park users young and old. A community meeting for the project was held May 25. For more project information, contact Jennifer Cooper or Kristen Zaremba, city of Oakland Acting Assistant Public Art Coordinator, at 510/238-2155 or kzaremba@oaklandnet.com.

**Get Involved**

One of the most wonderful things about FROG Park is that it is community-built and maintained. We need more FROG members to help us improve and maintain the park. Whether you have planting, weeding, painting, organizing skills, or just about any other skill or interest, WE NEED YOU. To volunteer or become a FROG Park Steward, contact Head BullFROG/Chief Steward/Volunteer Coordinator Howard Ferrier. For general information about getting involved with the FROG Committee, join us at our meetings held on the second Wednesday of each month at the Rockridge Library.

**Last Chance to Contribute**

Last call for contributions honoring FROG Park Phase I and Phase II construction! We'll be finalizing donor names for the signage and kiosk soon, so be sure to contribute to FROG Park before the June 30 deadline.

The new donor signs will list the names of all who gave $250 or more to FROG Park. Multiple gifts by an individual will be added and appear as a single total. If you make a new gift of $250 or more, or add to a previous gift to reach $250 or more, you can choose to have your name on the sign. Donors will be recognized at various levels from $250 up to $15,000. Those who made a donation of $250 or more will soon receive a letter requesting confirmation of how their names should be listed (contributors may also remain anonymous.)

Please use the coupon below to make your gift or visit the FROGpark website, www.FROGpark.org to make a contribution through PayPal. For more information about contributions, contact FROG Chair Theresa Nelson at 510/420-0539.

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# PTA Stands For: Plenty to Applaud

*by Mike Taylor, RCPC Schools Committee Chair*

The ceiling of the room is filled with homemade atomic models. Colorful mobiles made of Styrofoam, pipe cleaners, wood and whatever else the students could find are labeled with symbols and properties. From the notes left on the board, electron shells and Occam's Razor have been the topic of discussion earlier in the day.

But now, this science room is the setting of a Claremont Middle School PTA meeting. The busy-ness of the room and the length of our agenda indicate that a lot is going on at Claremont.

The attendees include parents, teachers, the principal and a School Board member. The discussion begins with the dominance of the three basketball teams and moves to Math Club events, the upcoming Yosemite Field trip and the beautification of the school. Recent negotiations between the district and the unions are explained in detail (the main reason I have come). One parent laments that those fleeing to private schools take money away from pubic schools. A tangential conversation occurs about how money is allocated to public schools. Although desperate to get home for my evening run, I stay longer than planned because I find the topics stimulating.

I make two conclusions about such grassroot efforts to improve our schools. One is that when you attend a community forum, you often learn much more than you planned. The other is that communities may be driven by a handful of dedicated individuals, but require the support of everyone to succeed. For ways you can help, see the Schools link at www.rockridge.org or just drop in on your school of choice.

# My Day at Tech

from page 2

during the year, but the most common is jog laps; lots and lots of laps around the football field. It's fun for me, in a way, but it's pretty darn painful once you've jogged your fifth or sixth lap.

The next two classes are my favorite. They are English and History, which have been linked into one two-hour class. We do huge amounts of work in this class for "Advanced Placement" prep. I don't like that part (I don't know any student that does), but I do like it when we have debates (which are unscheduled most of the time). The subject normally revolves around what we were discussing at the time (which always sparks from note-taking), but goes off on several different tangents until the whole class may be in an uproar.

Lunch comes up next. Not much happens here. Some kids play Frisbee, others play soccer, and quite a few play basketball and football. Some, like me, simply sit somewhere and watch everyone else pass by or do whatever.

My biology class is the second-largest in my schedule. We do a lot of note-taking and classwork. We have watched some films (okay, a lot of movies), and they all have to do with biology in some way, like Jurassic Park and GATTACA deal with DNA and gene alteration.

The last class I attend for the day is Advanced Algebra/Trigonometry. It's pretty advanced for my grade, as I am one of three freshmen in the class. It's intimidating at times, but I can cope with it. After an hour of equations and quadratic functions and linear graphs, it's time to go home.

I have two ways of getting home: getting a ride from a friend, or I can decide to not be lazy and walk back. The latter takes about 20 minutes unless I decide to jog it or power-walk. When I get home the journey is over, and I end up doing homework and then relaxing for the rest of the time. This whole process will repeat itself over and over and over, unless there happens to be a major project or assignment or the hated CAT [California Achievement Test] Exams.

The RCPC Schools Committee welcomes submissions from local students. Contact editor@rockridge.org

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## Town Hall

from page 1

Bob Franklin, BART Board of Directors, will discuss new funding streams available to improve the beauty and security of our local station. He will also provide initial ideas—such as ivy removal, a kiosk with real-time train information and greater accessibility—and solicit ideas from community residents. This is an opportunity to have a direct impact on your community.

Come share your ideas and concerns with RCPC, your BART director and your neighbors. And wear comfortable walking shoes! We will start promptly in the library and then walk to the BART station for a site visit.

# Standing Room Only as Temescal Considers Major Developments

*by Matthew Wadlund*

Most American cities are dynamic works in progress, and that's what makes them wonderful places. The late Jane Jacobs compared cities to living beings, functioning much like a body in which the streets are the arteries and veins. The constant flow of growth and innovation keeps cities alive.

The Temescal District's recent public meeting focussed on the neighborhood's lifeblood: Telegraph Avenue.

Hosted by Councilmember Jane Brunner, and with a presentation by Planning Director Claudia Cappio, the meeting filled Faith Presbyterian Church to standing-room-only with nearly 300 vocal Temescal and Rockridge residents.

Telegraph Avenue has seen a recent upswing in activity, energy, and the double-edged sword of development. A major concern voiced at the meeting was the effect of large, mixed-use developments, such as Temescal Place and the recently approved CIVIQ project (see *The Rockridge News*, April 8, 2006). Informed and active residents know that plans also are incubating for more large development along Telegraph and Claremont Avenues.

The open-forum discussion attracted new residents, young families and 30-year-long residents alike. Several developers also attended. Amid the occasional colorful oration, the at-times-impassioned dialogue evoked both the pros and the cons of development. Too much development too fast and Temescal could lose its character, balance and appeal. Not enough density and the critical mass for transportation, commerce and safety is not reached. What's the right building height limit? Where will all theses new residents and shoppers park? Where will families live?

The continued revitalization of the Temescal District, specifically along Telegraph Avenue from 40th Street to the Highway 24 overpass, could affect Rockridge in unforeseen ways.

Temescal residents' strong neighborhood participation empowers community involvement in Rockridge and neighborhoods throughout Oakland. Hats off to the residents of Temescal. Contact RCPC or the City of Oakland to get involved.

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## Caldecott Bore

from page 1

sible, particularly with regard to impacts on local communities.

**Draft EIR Overlooks Impacts**

The Coalition is concerned that the EIR may not adequately inform the public and appropriate government agencies about the environmental consequences of the project, and may not appropriately explore mitigations required under federal law. Specific issues include a truncated scope that does not extend beyond Broadway and does not include sensitive public sites like Chabot Elementary School, Claremont Middle School, Frog Park and Lake Temescal. In addition, the assessment fails to analyze the impact of increased traffic on downstream bottlenecks like the 24/980/580 interchange and the Maze, ignores impacts on traffic and pedestrian safety on local surface streets, and significantly downplays the effect of five-plus years of around the clock construction done on a massive scale.

Last year the coalition backed Vice-Mayor Jane Brunner's effort to ensure representation for Oakland residents. The city council then requested that the city administrator hire consultants to help review the draft environmental documents and develop appropriate options for mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate impacts to Oakland as the result of the project.

The Coalition is grateful for Brunner's work in shepherding this request to council.

To get involved with the Fourth Bore Coalition, please contact Kent Deverell at deverell@fluid.com.

## NCPC

from page 2

With more cops on patrol, the Mayor, City Council and OPD had hoped to see a drop in crime, but the data offer no confirmation. In Rockridge, the crime rate holds steady. The good news is that Oakland burglary victims may be able to get better follow-up since two more investigators were appointed, bringing the burglary investigation department to three. Automobile thefts continue to be the most common crime in beats 12Y and 13X (see www.rockridgencpc.com for beat maps) with home burglaries not far behind. At their monthly Rockridge District Association safety meeting, merchants noted the resurgence of vandalism to storefront windows by graffiti etchers.

Attendees at the May NCPC meeting shared recent incidents, among which was a mid-day home burglary in the Colby Park area when residents were absent from the house for just one hour. The burglars broke through a back window and left through the front door, carrying off the booty in a stolen backpack. The perpetrators appeared to have targeted the home, watching it and waiting for people to leave.

Officer Stevens had some crime prevention tips:

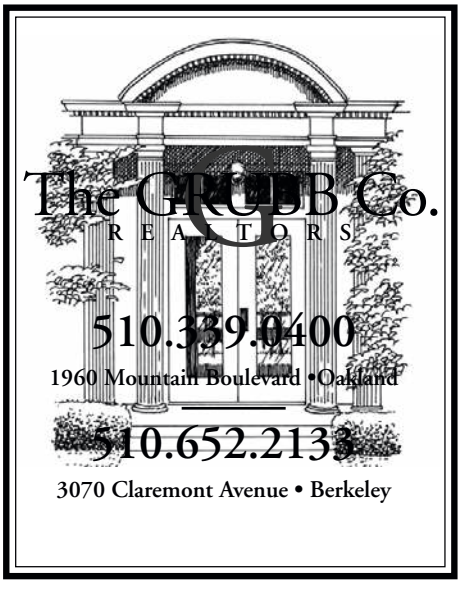
- Form a Neighborhood Watch for your block (call 238-6372).
- Join the neighborhood Yahoo Groups (Rockridge Neighborhood Watch Network and Colby Park).
- Research the best kind of locks for your home. For instance, a front-door inside key lock is recommended over a typical dead bolt.
- Consider good fencing to make your back yard less accessible.
- When walking, avoid dimly lit areas with heavy brush; be aware of who is around you.
- Do not leave inviting items in your car.

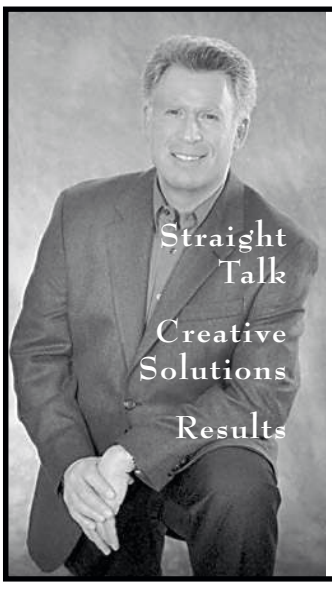
The GRNCPC will hold its annual Town Hall meeting on Thursday, July 20, at the Rockridge Library. Speakers from Neighborhood Watch and C.O.R.E. will be featured along with our very own North Oakland Police Service Area Commander, Lieutenant Jim Meeks. Election of NCPC officers will also take place. Anyone interested in running for office should contact the NCPC via info@rockridgencpc.com

**2006 to Date Crime Statistics for Beats 12Y and 13X**

| Month / Crime | 10851 | 211 | 459(R) | 459(A) | 459(C) | 245(A) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | 10 | 6 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| February | 18 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| March | 14 | 4 | 13 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| April | 17 | 6 | 15 | 5 | 1 | 2 |

**Key:**
10851 • vehicle theft, auto
211 • robbery
459(R) • residential burglary
459(A) • auto burglary
459(C) • commercial burglary
245(A) • assault with a deadly weapon


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# The Rockridge Muse

by Ortrun Niesar

## Comings and Goings

### Rockridge Book Seeks Author

Arcadia Publishing has contacted Rockridge resident Annalee Allen, who authored *Oakland, A Post Card History*, to help find an author (or authors) interested in working with them to produce a book on the history of Rockridge through historic photographs, postcards and such. The publishers have a certain format for their books — check out Annalee's — that must be followed. Rockridge's history is full of drama that makes good bedtime reading, from rural beginnings, urban settlers, housing development and "progress" beyond the Hills, to a hideout for Patty Hearst and the Symbionese Liberation Army, the Great Fire of 1991 and its rebirth as one of the premier neighborhoods in the East Bay. Interested? Call Annalee at 510/654-6791 or e-mail her at ldmklady@aol.com (that's "landmark lady") for more information. Incidentally, former Rockridge resident Greta Dutcher put out a similar book about Alameda where she lives now, and Erika Mailman has written *Oakland Hills* for Arcadia. You would be joining an exclusive club.

### Poetry Found

Sixteen Rivers Press has just published *Any Old Wolf*, a lovely first collection of poems by long-time Rockridge resident Murray Silverstein. Murray, an architect by profession, has coauthored several books, including *A Pattern Language*, a must-read for every student of architecture. His warm, compassionate, and witty poetry resonates with the cadence and sound of Rockridge life. His first reading took place at Cody's on Telegraph (sadly, soon to be gone) last month. There will be another at Mrs. Dalloway's, on College Avenue in Elmwood, in September, date to be announced. Buy a copy at a neighborhood bookstore, or at www.sixteenrivers.org. By the way, Murray tells me that two more Rockridge poets, Helen Wickes and Nina Lindsay, are slated for publication in 2007.



**Murray Silverstein: Architect, author, poet, Rockridge resident.**

### Rockridge Annual Photo Exhibition

The show will go on after all, due to popular demand and many new photographers coming out of the dark room or Photoshop and craving an audience. Scheduled for October at the Community Gallery in the Rockridge Library, the loosely juried show is open to all ages and levels of experience. Participants, however, must live, go to school or work in or around Rockridge, or have some other strong connection to the area. The theme: a discovery of who we are individually and how we function as a community. To participate, either as a photographer or show organizer, please e-mail me at oniesar@aol.com or call Courtenay Redis at 510/541-3253. Do it now! Entry deadline is August 25.

### Pro Arts Open Studios June 3-4 and 10-11

It's here and it's happening! The maps are out in the East Bay Express and in cafes and bookstores along College Avenue. Pick one up and plan a weekend day of studio touring. You can walk or bike it in an afternoon if you limityourself to studios in the Rockridge/North Oakland/Claremont vicinity, and get good exercise as well. Ample refreshments will be available. For an overview of East Bay Open Studios 2006, visit Pro Arts Gallery at 550 Second Street in the Jack London Square area, call 510/763-9425 or go to www.proartsgallery.org.

Ortrun Niesar, the Rockridge Muse, can be reached at oniesar@aol.com or 510/652-6664.




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|---|---|---|---|
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| 5332 Bryant Avenue | 2/1 | $ 679,000 | $ 710,000 |
| 5357 Shafter Avenue | 2/1 | $ 749,000 | $ 835,000 |
| 6045 Claremont Avenue | 3/2 | $ 875,000 | $ 869,000 |
| 5829 Colby Street | 4/1 | $ 899,000 | $ 1,020,000 |
| 5265 Lawton Avenue | 3/2 | $ 1,050,000 | $ 1,150,000 |
| 5780 Marigold Drive | 3/2 | $ 1,385,000 | $ 1,375,000 |

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# Book Note

by Cy Gulassa

*Cogito* by Martin Aronson, available online at Amazon or Barnes and Noble, and via Diesel Books and Pendragon Books.

Traditional summer reading is light stuff—romance, mystery, travel—appropriate for lazy beaches or drowsy afternoons in the backyard hammock. Rockridge author Martin Aronson's new book bucks that torpid trend. *Cogito* is a mental wakeup call, a summons to stretch, think big and enjoy the exhilaration of Rene Descartes' dictum, *cogito ergo sum*: "I think, therefore I am."



**Martin Aronson**
Photo: Cy Gulassa

The book consists of 18 essays, varying from five to twenty pages, that explore a range of intriguing ideas. On the occasion of his 50th birthday, Aronson wrote the essay "The Future as History," a meditation on what the world will be like when he reaches 100. In "The Beatles Karamazov," he convincingly argues that the musicians bear an uncanny psychological resemblance to Dostoevsky's four main character types. Ever ponder why so many religions use the trinity motif when describing the attributes of their deities? Ever speculate on the nature of chaos? Read *Cogito* for cogent answers. The short essays provoke lively reflection, a refreshing tonic for summer afternoons.

**Martin Aronson**, a writer and editor who lives in Rockridge, is the author of *Jesus and Lao Tzu: The Parallel Sayings* (Ulysses Press) and *Journey to the Heart* (iUniverse).

# Letters to The Editor

from page 6

## Thieves Dig Up, Steal Mature Trees from Yards

**Editor:**

We recently planted a Japanese Maple tree in our front yard (on our property) and much to our surprise (and anger) someone has STOLEN it! Can you believe that?

It was literally dug up and dragged through our yard and loaded into someone's vehicle. The theft occurred either after 8 p.m. on Saturday, May 13, or before 10 a.m. on Sunday, May 14. We live near Broadway and Lawton Avenue and thought we would warn other neighbors about this strange theft. A similar thing happened to our neighbor across the street; their Dogwood tree was stolen a few months back.

Although our tree is replaceable, its theft is disturbing and irritating. We spent a lot of time researching different types of trees that would do well in our yard based on all the elements, not to mention the time we spent finding and planting it.

We are not sure what homeowners can do to protect themselves; we thought we would share this information as there are many beautiful gardens in our neighborhoods.

Thanks.

***The Bhatias***

**Correction:** A sentence in the article "More Than the Way You Look," *The Rockridge News*, May 6, should have read: "Many of the women who work with Veronica come from diverse cultures, so it's important to her that the women, while practicing their speaking, find their voice." **— Editor**

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## Library Celebrates

from page 1

located. In 1987 the property changed hands and the new owner raised the rent from $500 to $5,000. The City of Oakland balked at the rent increase, so the library lost its home and moved into a double-wide trailer in the schoolyard of Claremont Middle School across the street. No one was happy about this, and the search for permanent quarters began.

Attention soon focused on the former Art Stone and Pottery Works property, which included three adjacent lots along College Avenue south of Manila. The City was already in the process of acquiring the property for off-street parking. RCPC and the College Avenue Merchants Association designated a joint committee to look into other possible uses of the site, and to communicate with the City, with the aid of then-Councilmember Marge Gibson-Haskell. The early proposals brought to the committee called for mixed-use development, with a branch library squeezed in alongside retail and gallery spaces. One developer "wanted to build a row of commercial storefronts 'with a nice quiet room in the back for your library,'" remembers Nancy with a chuckle.

After several months of meetings, the joint committee recommended that the entire Art Stone site be dedicated to the Rockridge Branch Library and associated parking. The feasibility of the idea was uncertain, to say the least. An article in the February 1988 *Rockridge News* stated: "Discussions with the City have revealed that no City funds are available to construct the new branch library.... The City is agreeable, however, to using a portion of the Art Stone property for a library branch if funding is secured by the neighborhood."

During 1988, hopes began to rise that the Rockridge Library would get a permanent home. In October, *The Rockridge News* reported that nearly two-thirds of those responding to an RCPC survey of residents had "stated that a new permanent branch library was their most desired improvement for Rockridge." The RCPC Board of Directors had already endorsed the idea of a neighborhood special assessment district to raise the funds for construction. (It would also be necessary to reimburse the City's off-street parking fund for the land given over to non-parking uses.) During these same months, Nancy Dutcher and other library supporters formed a Library Project Steering Committee — soon reborn as the "Neighbors for a Rockridge Library" — to develop the plan for a library on the Art Stone site, and to pursue the funding package.

Even as the idea grew, the site itself was expanding. By the end of the year, the adjoining property at the southeast corner of College and Manila, containing the 1906 Windmuller house and storefront, had come on the market and was being acquired by the City.

The Neighbors for a Rockridge Library quickly set to work with the City, to assemble the funding for a library project on the entire site. Nancy was told that most people throw out computer-addressed envelopes without even opening them, so she and her cohorts hand-addressed a mind-boggling 6,000 letters to residents of the greater Rockridge area, asking if they would consider an increase in their property taxes to fund the local library. Shaking her head in amazement, Nancy recalls: "Within a month we had $10,000 in donations, $8,000 of which we used for the election campaign. I was really overwhelmed by the positive response. We made 'Vote Yes on L' window signs, yard signs, and did telephone nights; Coldwell Banker let us use their office in Montclair." In November 1990, an overwhelming 81.6% of Rockridge residents voted to approve a $25 annual parcel tax to fund construction of a new home for the library.

But that was just step one. In 1991, the State Library Prop. 85 Funding Committee was awarding grants to build new libraries; two-thirds of the funds would be provided by the state and one-third would be covered by local funds. More districts were interested than could be accommodated. "Rockridge's proposal wasn't highly ranked," Nancy recalls. "Then the Oakland Hills fire happened. In late November, we heard there would be a vote on December 17. Several members of Neighbors for a Rockridge Library drove to Sacramento and sat in the front row of the audience on the day of the committee vote. They wore name badges decorated with red cellophane flames to remind the committee of what Rockridge had just been through."

Out of 48 libraries applying for state funds, only 12 applicants were approved; Rockridge was one of them, receiving $2.4 million.

Groundbreaking came on February 11, 1995, and the doors officially opened on August 3, 1996, with a well-attended grand opening and dedication ceremony. Today, the beloved Rockridge Library serves as an anchor of the community and consistently ranks as the second-busiest branch in the Oakland Public Library system.

It has now been 10 years since the new building opened its doors, and 19 years since Nancy and other concerned Rockridge residents began the campaign for a permanent home. The story of the campaign is fascinating history and a testament to the power of grassroots volunteer efforts in Rockridge.

## FORL Plans Gala Event for Rockridge Library Anniversary

Hold the date! To mark the first 10 years of the Rockridge Branch Library at College & Manila, the Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) are planning a gala celebration, to be held at the Library on the evening of Tuesday, September 12. Bookworms of all stripes will gather upstairs to hear a panel of outstanding local authors address the topic, "Writers on Reading." Downstairs, there will be delights and surprises for kids.

The present Rockridge Branch Library came into being through a nine-year, community-wide effort, begun by RCPC in the 1980s (see accompanying article.) The Branch opened its doors to the public on August 3, 1996.

Look for further news of the planned celebration in the July issue of *The Rockridge News.*

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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**

**Remember to Vote**
**Tuesday, June 6**

## Councilmember Brunner's Annual Summer Picnic

**Everyone invited**. BBQ and drinks provided — you bring a side dish or dessert. July 9, 12 noon to 3pm. Temescal Regional Park, North Temescal picnic site. 6500 B'way, next to the highway 24/13 interchange. Parking off B'way ($4 fee).

**No Community Meetings in June or July**. 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: 6/3, 6/10, 7/1, 7/8.
- **Pre-School Story Time**: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am: 6/7 (replaced by Zoomobile presentation), 6/21, 7/5.
- **Pajama Story Time**: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7pm: 6/13, 6/27.

**SPECIAL EVENTS FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES:**

- **Zoomobile's Introduction to Animals**: Wednesday, 6/7, at 11am. For pre-school age children, (in place of Preschool Story time).
- **Make a Summer Reading Journal:** especially for kids 7 through 12. Thursday, 6/15, 3pm to 4:30pm.
- **Magic Mike**: a spectacular magic show **for all ages**. Tuesday, 6/20, 7pm.
- **Family Reading Workshop**: special Story Time and Craft/Activity for families with kids ages 1 to 6. Tuesday, 6/27, 7pm.
- **Wildlife Associates; Predator and Prey**. Kids of all ages invited to meet rescued wild animals. Wednesday, 6/28, 3pm.
- **Make Origami Animals with Won-Ju**: for kids 7 to 12 (younger kids welcome with a helpful grown-up). Thursday, 6/29, 3pm.
- **Dance Naganuma Student Performance**: Friday, 7/7, 3:30pm.

**FOR TEENS:**

- **Junior Volunteers Needed to help with the Summer Reading Program**, which will begin on June 10. If you are between the ages of 11 and 15, and are available for 2 hours a day during the summer, ( you can work only one time or all summer, depending on how much time you have), call Erica ASAP at 597-5017 to find out the details and set up your volunteer schedule.
- **Bookwormz (Teen-Led Book Club)**: 3rd Saturday of the month, 6/17, from 1 to 2pm in upstairs mtg. room. **Anime Club:** Watch and talk about new anime (Japanese animation) with other teens. 2nd Tuesday of each month, from 5 to 6:30pm, in the upstairs mtg. room. On 6/13 we will watch *DNAngel*.
- **New Teen Summer Reading Program at the Oakland Public Library**: open to teens entering the 7th through 12th grades. Teens will get a sign-up gift and win other prizes for reading over the summer. Program starts July 1 and ends Sept. 5. Register at the Rockridge Library. For questions about this or any other teen event, call Susy, the Teen Specialist Librarian, at 597-5017.

**FOR ADULTS:**

- **Book Reading and signing:** Local author **Mose Durst**: *Oakland, California: Toward a Sustainable City*. Saturday, 6/17, 2pm to 3:30pm.
- **Lawyers in the Library: No June meeting** because Library is a polling place for elections.

**ART EXHIBITS:**

- **Gallery:** June: **Far West School:** Art Show. July: **Aliea Wallace:** Photo Etchings.
- **Display Case:** June: **Rockridge Teen'scape;** photos by teens of after-school patrons. July: **Mittie Cuetara:** Watercolors of dogs and cats.

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, **AND Closed Tuesday, July 4**

## Diesel Book/Poetry Events

**All events are FREE and open to the public**

- Tuesday, 6/6, 7:30pm. **First mtg. of new Spirituality Book Group**. Discussion of *The Left Hand of God: Taking Back Our Country from the Religious Right,* by Rabbi Michael Lerner. All are welcome.
- Thursday, 6/8, 7:30pm. **Lewis Buzbee:** T*he Yellow-Lighted Bookshop*.
- Sunday, 6/11, 3pm. **Daniel Pinchbeck:** *2012: The Return of Quetzalcoatl*.
- Thursday, 6/15, 7:30pm. **Sheerly Avni:** *Cinema by the Bay*.
- Thursday, 6/29, 7pm. **Lama Sherab Drolma:** Teachings offered by the Brazilian Lama as part of U.S. speaking tour.

5433 College Ave. For more information about other events, Book Discussion Groups and *El Grupito*, the Spanish discussion group: 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 1 to 5pm. For more information: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.

## Pro Arts Open Studios

More than twenty Rockridge artists will be participating on the weekends of June 3-4 and June 11-12. Meet and interact with artists, and view artworks and studio workspaces. Pick up **free map and directory** at the Rockridge Library, and several other shops on College Ave. For more information: 763-4361 or www.proartsgallery.org.

## Julia Morgan Center Events

- **Bharatnatyam Arangetram:** Formal dance debut of Maghana Gadgil. Traditional Indian dance. Saturday, 6/17, 2pm. **Free event.**
- **Family Film Sunday Series:** *Mulan*. Sunday, 6/18, 11am. Suggested $5 donation to benefit the Julia Morgan Center. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

Presented at the Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 2640 College Ave. For information on other events: 845-8542 or www.juliamorgan.org.

## Earthquake Safety & Preparedness Workshop for Rockridge

Saturday, June 10, 11am. Hosted at the Rockridge Montessori School, 5633 Manila Ave. Adults only; no childcare available. RSVP at 652-7021: ask for Sid or Paul.

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