THE Rockridge News

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Happy Holidays!
No Town Hall Meeting in December

An Evening of Water And Wild Weather

November Town Hall Meeting Report

by: Annette Floystrup, RCPC board member

The November 15 RCPC Town Hall Meeting was an elemental feast of water and wild weather phenomena. Rockridge resident and author Christopher C. Burt, author of "Extreme Weather, Climate Change Edition," gave a lively overview of the effects of global warming on extreme weather phenomena such as hurricanes, tornadoes, cyclones and floods, as well as the better known California experience of rain, snow and drought cycles.

Armed with a map of the globe, Chris demonstrated that there were large geographical differences in the effects of global warming between the northern and southern hemispheres. Population growth and distribution, land masses and growing global industrialization were related to the strength and size of storms over both land and sea. Chris proved the point that passionate engagement in one's topic is the best way to inspire interest in others. The audience delighted him with questions ranging from the effect of urban heat islands to whether there is global warming on Mars.

▪ Wild Weather, page 5

Changes, New Staff for Jane Brunner's Office

by Mike McDonald, FROG Steering Committee

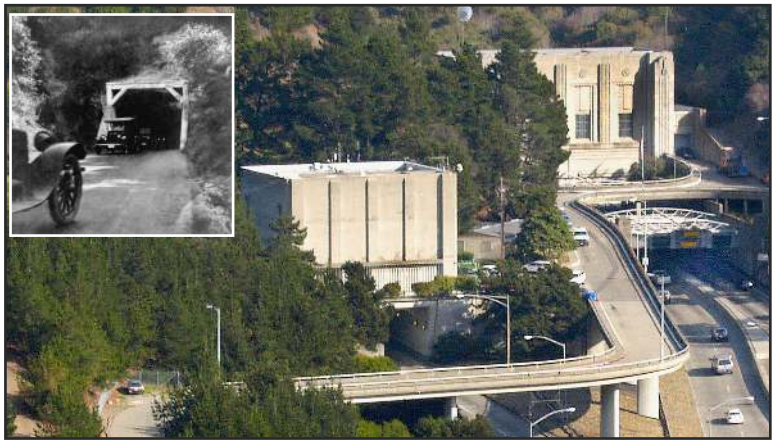
Councilmember Jane Brunner's office has seen many changes in the last few months. New members to the office include Nila Kim, taking over Kate Whitlow's job as Rockridge liaison and Brunner's scheduling assistant. Whitlow, who did an outstanding job for Brunner and for Rockridge, has moved to New York City.

Kim, originally from Seattle, worked for the Washington State Department of Transportation as a communications consultant. Prior to that she was campaign manager for Seattle City Councilmember Richard Conlin.

Kim is digging in and getting to know Rockridge since joining Brunner's staff a mere two months ago. She

▪ New Staff, page 9

Fourth Bore Coalition Sues Caltrans Over Tunnel Study



Commuters travelling between Alameda and Contra Costa Counties snake through three tunnels (bores) lying beneath the Berkeley Hills. The two right-hand (out-bound from Oakland) tunnels were built in 1937; a third was added at the left of those tunnels in 1964 (boxy shape in center of the main picture). Citing lengthy commute delays and the cumbersome routine of reversing the center tunnel traffic direction to meet commute needs, Caltrans plans a fourth bore to be located to the left of the 1964 bore. (*Inset:* Proposed in 1861, the Kennedy Tunnel, an early precursor to the Caldecott Tunnel, was completed in 1903. The photo is from 1918, the year the tunnel had lights installed.)

PHOTOS: KENNEDY TUNNEL; COURTESY OF THE LAFAYETTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY. CALDECOTT TUNNEL TODAY; DON KINKEAD

by Ellen Peterson and Kent Deverell, RCPC representatives to the Fourth Bore Coalition

The Fourth Bore Coalition (FBC), an organization of neighborhood groups and residents on the west side of the Caldecott tunnel, has filed suit against Caltrans to invalidate the environmental impact study associated with the $420 million fourth bore project. The FBC contends that the environmental impact study by Caltrans violated the California Environmental Quality Act, National Environmental Quality Act and federal transportation law by failing to consider wider impacts of the project. Both the RCPC and FROG Park are members of the coalition and support the legal action.

The inadequacies of Caltrans' environmental impact study were documented during the initial comment period in July 2006. Organizations as diverse as the RCPC and other community planning groups, the East Bay Bicycle Coalition, the City of Berkeley, the Bay Area Air Quality Management Board, and the City of Oakland pointed out serious deficiencies in the report. These include: a severely limited area of study that does not include impacts on surface streets and sensitive receptors [schools, residential areas and

▪ Fourth Bore Suit, page 10

Former Rockridge News Editor Jackie Tasch Publishes Novel

by Rockridge News staff

Since the time when she was 8 years old, former Rockridge News Editor Jackie Tasch has dreamed that one day she would write a book, in particular a novel. She says it has taken her a long time to get there and the road was "winding and occasionally rocky." But she's happy to share the good news about "The Man of My Dreams," an offbeat and funny novel about a middle-aged woman whose cat occasionally turns up looking like a famous actor. Their adventures take them from a shopping trip in downtown San Francisco—would a man-cat wear boxers or briefs?—to a family dinner rivaling the Mad Hatter's tea party, and just when things are getting back to normal, his family shows up. All indications are readers will enjoy the novel—and you might have some fiction- and/or feline-loving friends who would also appreciate it. Jackie writes: "I had much to be thankful for this year. I hope your Thanksgiving was full of family, good friends, and fine food—with more of the same coming for the holidays."

To learn more about the book and book readings and signings, e-mail Jackie at jatasch@sbcglobal.net.

RCPC Distributes 500 Light Bulbs

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC board member

As part of a statewide program to encourage the use of energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL), RCPC has finished distributing 500 CFLs to local residents. The month-long program, run jointly by the Sierra Club and PG&E under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), is the largest free CFL distribution ever attempted. A total of over 500,000 light bulbs were distributed.



RCPC distributed the bulbs at two RCPC town hall meetings, the College Avenue Halloween parade, and the Rockridge District Association's Christmas tree-lighting event. In addition, RCPC volunteers distributed CFLs on several blocks within Rockridge. RCPC thanks everyone who helped out. Beyond the free distribution, PG&E is continuing to subsidize the cost of CFLs sold at commercial outlets. PG&E's participation results from a special CPUC-mandated conservation set-aside from PG&E's revenues.

A reminder: while CFL use is good for the environment (and your pocketbook), the bulbs contain small amounts of toxic mercury and must be recycled, not simply thrown in the trash.

For information on CFL recycling, call 800/606-6606 or go to http://stopwaste.org and choose "hazardous materials" on the "where can I recycle" menu.

Correction: Annette Floystrup was the author and John Gussman and others also contributed to the article "College Avenue Owners May form New District; Area Impact Unknown," which appeared in the October 2007 Rockridge News. The byline was inadvertently omitted. Pre-publication review and comment were provided by RCPC Chairwoman Ronnie Spitzer and RCPC boardmembers, and incorporated in the article.

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See Calendar, page 15, for December hours.

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 (RCPC), 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?

Contact us at one of the following:
Editor: editor@rockridge.org
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Articles submitted for publication may be e-mailed to the above address. Submissions are limited to 600 words; must include the author's name, phone number, e-mail address, and city or neighborhood of residence; and are subject to editing. To reprint a *Rockridge News* article, please contact the editor.

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES
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PROJECT UPDATES

RCPC's Planning and Project Review Committee (PPRC)

by Richard W. Smith, PPRC chairman

■ Kingfish Co-Housing Project — 5244-48 Claremont Avenue

Project Description: A 33-unit, 5-story project fronting on both Telegraph and Claremont avenues housing small residential condominiums intended for Cohousing occupancy. The ground floor has commercial fronting on Claremont and under-podium parking for 28 cars.

Processing History: On July 18, 2007, the Planning Commission approved the project. RCPC filed an appeal to the City Council on July 30. Contingent on RCPC approval, the Council proposed changes, among them a reduction in height, which were accepted by RCPC and approved by Council members.

■ Mixed Use Project — 5175 Broadway

Project Description: A condominium project located at the corner of Broadway and Coronado Avenue featuring two 2-bedroom units, 25 1-bedroom units and over 2,200 sq. ft. of retail/commercial space. The four-story structure is built over a basement containing 27 parking spaces with access from Coronado. The project is in the C-30 zone, which allows up to 21 residential units on the property, and in the Community Commercial General Plan designation, which allows up to 49 residential units. In Oakland, General Plan designations currently supersede the zones designated in the Zoning map and ordinances.



The corner of 51st Street and Telegraph Avenue, pictured above and known as the Global Video site, is slated for development as the Hauser Creekside project, described at right, and the CIVIQ project. The Creekside structure would face Telegraph Avenue while CIVIQ will face onto 51st Street.

Photo: Don Kinkead

Processing Requirements: The City requires a Zoning Variance to change the front of the lot from Coronado to Broadway. The project appears to meet all other zoning requirements. Since the property is the site of a former gas station, the State requires a toxic site cleanup which is underway.

Processing History: In addition to the Minor Variance application, the City required the applicant to provide a traffic study, which has been completed and is under Staff review. Staff believes the results from the site cleanup and the traffic study will lead to a Mitigated Negative Declaration in lieu of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). RCPC encouraged the project applicant to meet with interested surrounding neighbors for review and comment. The City's staff report, including the toxic site cleanup and the traffic study, should be available for review. Staff expects the first hearing to be in January 2008.

■ Hauser Creekside (Global Video site) — 5132 Telegraph

Project Description: The Global Video building will be torn down and replaced by a mixed-use project consisting of residential, commercial and parking. An above grade, two-story parking podium structure will provide 105 parking spaces. Under the podium, adjacent to parking and facing Claremont and Telegraph, will be approximately 8,000 sq. ft. of commercial/retail. On top of the podium will be 120 residential condominiums, five of which will be affordable housing. The residential units are in two components: five stories over the parking structure resulting in seven stories facing Claremont and Telegraph; and three stories over the podium, resulting in five stories facing Clarke Avenue.

Processing Requirements: The

▪ Project Updates, page 6

Rockridge Residents Sought for Planning and Project Review Committee

The RCPC board invites Rockridge residents interested in serving on the RCPC Project and Planning Review Committee (PPRC) to submit their applications.

This board-appointed committee advises the board on Rockridge development projects and Oakland's Planning Code. At least two committee positions are open. Candidates should submit a letter by January 15, 2008 describing their interest and qualifications according to the following guidelines, and a professional resume. A selection committee including two board members and the PPRC chair will contact applicants and conduct interviews for full board consideration at the February 7, 2008 board meeting. Applications should be sent electronically or through the mail to either rcpcchair@rockridge.org or RCPC, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618.

Candidate Selection Guidelines for the PPRC:

Appointments to the PPRC are made by the board of directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC). Any adult 18 or over residing within the boundaries of the RCPC may apply for a position on the PPRC. *Selection guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following:*

1. Experience and/or education in architecture, urban planning, urban design, land use, and environmental review (or equivalent as determined by the selection committee);

2. Ability to read and interpret preliminary architectural drawings; (or equivalent as determined by the selection committee);

3. Ability to read, interpret, and apply the zoning provisions of the Oakland Planning Code; (or equivalent as determined by the selection committee);

4. Availability to devote the necessary time to the review of potential planning changes and proposed projects;

5. Availability to attend some daytime meetings and late afternoon-evening planning commission and city council hearings;

6. Familiarity with urban planning, development, and/or transportation issues in Rockridge; and

7. Supports the RCPC mission statement. [RCPC mission statement: The purposes for which this corporation is formed are 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.]

Letters to the Editor

The Rockridge News welcomes letters to the editor. Your name, address, phone number and e-mail address and city/ neighborhood must be included for verification. Only your name will appear with your letter. Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity.

Response to 4th Bore and Other Concerns: "Precious"

Editor

I, as Pat Parker wrote in her letter in the November issue of The Rockridge News, do not understand how a fourth Caldecott Tunnel bore will have a long-term impact on Rockridge. I do not now commute through the tunnel, but used to for years and believe the pollution caused by the cars sitting in rush hour traffic is much worse than RCPC's concern that the fourth bore will possibly cause more traffic on Highway 24. Come on, people sit in traffic because they HAVE to go through the tunnel, not because they enjoy sitting in traffic. A fourth bore will not cause more traffic!

As a Rockridge homeowner for 13 years, I am ashamed of the "precious" attitude that RCPC's members have of their neighborhood. Every and any attempt at growth is viewed with suspicion and personal attack: Dreyer's Ice Cream expansion (not that I care for their politics as they are owned by Nestles); CCAC's expansion; the remodel/expansion of the gas station store on Broadway; and most recently the KingFish building site (who are we to decide what our wonderful Temescal patrons do with their neighborhood?).

— Maris Albert

Make it Easier to Recycle Hazardous Waste

Editor:

We are aware that many items around our homes contain harmful, even toxic substances. However, what to do with this "stuff"? There is an Alameda County Household Hazardous Waste Disposal facility at 2100 East 7th Street, Oakland, off Highway 880 (23rd Street exit). Their website contains information about what can be brought in and hours of operation: http://stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=577

I have routinely disposed of batteries and old cans of paint at the site, but now I must include old fluorescent lamps. They contain toxic gases and substances and must also be kept out of the garbage and land fill.

Since many of us work during the week and going down to the disposal facility is not terribly convenient, I called Waste Management to learn if they might come and do a collection in the neighborhood, if it was well organized. I was told that this was not possible and that neighbors could not bring other people's waste along with theirs to the disposal site because the State requires a special permit for anyone who "hauls" hazardous waste.

This seems outrageous to me. Given that the City of Oakland is encouraging the use of mass transit and many condo owners do not own cars, is AC Transit the proper way to bring fluorescent bulbs and old paint to a recycling center?

Given the fact that more and more items require special handling, so that our environment remains healthy, I think that we should do something to change the laws about requiring special permits to transport toxics and that Alameda County should be more proactive in assisting residents to properly dispose of hazardous waste.

— Susan Shawl

Unilateral Hillcrest Boundary Shift Not Helpful

Editor:

Many residents of North Oakland are aware of the growing over-enrollment challenges facing our fine neighborhood schools. But what most residents of North Oakland do not know is that the OUSD [Oakland Unified School District] Board is now considering recommendations to address over-enrollment that were submitted unilaterally by the parents and administration of Hillcrest School. The recommendations solve Hillcrest's problem without regard for any impact on neighboring schools like Peralta, Chabot, Thornhill, and Montclair.

Most disconcerting is Hillcrest's proposal to adjust the "attendance-area boundaries" of its school to limit enrollment to the number of seats available at Hillcrest. Almost as an afterthought, the Hillcrest report acknowledges that modifying its school boundaries "will necessitate the simultaneous adjustment to the attendance-area boundaries of other nearby schools."

The OUSD Board must recognize that if it accommodates only a single school, it simply shifts the overcrowding problem to other nearby schools. Any Board decision must include the needs and interests of all schools in the affected area.

The OUSD Board's next meeting is scheduled for December 12, during which the Hillcrest proposal will be considered. Concerned residents should attend the meeting and demand a comprehensive solution to overcrowding in North Oakland schools.

— Kelly Cushner and Jeff McCarthy

Credit Where Credit is Due, For Free

Editor:

If you are wondering about your credit standing, you can obtain a free, instant annual credit report by going to http://www.annualcreditreport.com. You can also call 877/322-8228 or submit a request by mail, but a response may take up to 15 days. This annual service was mandated by the FACT ACT passed by Congress in 2003, which permits consumers to obtain a free credit report once every twelve months. In cooperation with the Federal Trade Commission, the three nationwide consumer credit reporting companies — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — jointly set up the website to provide free annual reports. It's a good way to fight fraud and identity theft.

— Robert Wiles

▪ Letters, page 5



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Letters

from page 4

Fireplace Smoke Unhealthy; Put on a Sweater

Editor:

Fall is upon us and we've already had a few chilly days. It's time to stop and think whether we want to use our fireplace to send particulate pollution into the air we all breathe. Home insulation, warmer clothing… these are personal choices that don't affect our neighbors. As a source of heat, fireplaces are not efficient. The personal, ambient pleasure they provide is no longer justification for putting our personal particulate matter into the air. Our climate is temperate enough for outdoor activity and open windows in fall and winter. It is more than a nuisance to have to breathe fireplace smoke while outside – worse, to have it enter our home through an open window. It is a health issue.

Particulate matter, when inhaled, goes deep into the lungs and stays there. It is harmful to children, the elderly, and those with respiratory problems (recent research has also shown correlation of air pollution with heart disease); but it affects us all. Our mixed-use neighborhood already has a lot of particulate pollution from traffic. Why allow wood smoke particulates to further pollute the air we breathe? WWW.sparetheair.org can provide more information. Burning dry wood, knowing how to start and put out a fire and not burning on still-air days can all help, too.

— Mary Jane Makar

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Wild Weather

from page 1

Much of Chris' presentation centered on water, both too much and too little, in the form of catastrophic rain storms and catastrophic drought. These topics led into the presentation by Pamela Michael, executive director and co-founder with former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Hass (1995-97), of the acclaimed River of Words organization which helps connect children around the world with their watersheds.

Audience members were treated to a stunning presentation of children's art and poetry about water. The images came from all over the world and powerfully connected water and place to their, and our, everyday lives. Pam asked the audience to view the images while keeping in mind an intriguing observation she has made about the artwork submissions. She sees thousands of children's pictures every year, and can, almost without fail, pick out those images that come from the USA because they are the images that do not contain people. As the audience sat through the presentation, slide after slide from all around the globe showed people interacting as families with water – cooking, playing, eating and drinking, walking along a river and washing clothes. But the pictures from children in the USA were almost exclusively landscapes, often mountainous, with an occasional animal.

In all countries, River of Words seeks to establish community partnerships in support of education and watersheds by inspiring creek clean-ups and restorations, community gardens, getting kids excited about learning, and connecting informed and engaged citizens with business-people, government agencies, and learning communities—all working together toward common, self-defined goals.

River of Words has an extraordinary collection of art and poetry entitled "River of Words: Images and Poetry in Praise of Water," which is available at the Rockridge Branch Library and should definitely be shared with children.

As we head into our rainy season, it is appropriate to celebrate rain with the words of 10-year-old Margie Lauter:

What Happens After the Rain?

After the rain
water weaves its way through
silver strands
of the spider's web

Falling on berries
as red as a robin's belly

Making a dull red leaf
become a creamy brown

The sand,
which used to slip through my fingers
turns slimy and bumpy

The bark on an old willow tree
smells like a new penny

I feel a slight drizzle
left from the hard rain
falling down my back

This is what happens
after the rain

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For more info about the authors and their projects go to:
http://extremeweatherguide.com/index.asp
http://riverofwords.org
http://www.thewatershedproject.org
http://www.urbancreeks.org

Pop Quiz

Name at least two creeks still running in Rockridge.
(Answers below.)

Creeks in Rockridge today:
• Harwood Creek, also known as
• Claremont Creek
•Temescal Creek
•Rockridge Creek (Broadway branch)
We live in the Temescal watershed.

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Project Updates

from page 3

processing requirements for this project are complicated and subject to changes in the project design. The initial staff report indicated that five variances and an Interim Conditional Use Permit are required, along with a traffic study and a Focused EIR.

Processing History: On May 23 , the Planning Commission's Design Review Committee approved the project despite RCPC's detailed and substantial objection. The City is preparing an Initial Study that will lead to a Focused EIR more fully addressing traffic and certain neighborhood impacts. The Initial Study and a Scoping Session for the Focused EIR will be the subject of a Planning Commission public hearing. The scope of the Focused EIR and the traffic study may be expanded as a result of the public Scoping Session slated for January 2008.

■ Safeway Rebuild — 6310 College Avenue (College & Claremont)

Project Description: Safeway plans to demolish the existing 23,000 sq. ft. store and build a larger one with increased parking. Safeway representatives desire community input and are sensitive to the street front design along College Avenue. Aware of the traffic problems along College, Safeway has hired a traffic engineering firm. In addition, the company has hired a local architect to design the site plan and an exterior building envelope in keeping with the spirit of Rockridge architecture.

Processing Requirements: Demolishing this store, originally built to C-30 standards, and putting up a new one subjects it to C-31 zoning requirements. Although Safeway has not filed an application with the City yet, nor even had a "pre-application conference," it will be required to apply for variances, a Conditional Use Permit, and undergo Design Review because of major conflicts with C-31 zoning.

Processing History: No application has been filed. Safeway plans to return to the community soon with design options.

■ New Restaurant — 5474 College Avenue (corner of College and Taft)

Project Description: In the 750 sq. ft. space now occupied by Madame Butterfly (which is closing the end of December), the proposal is to build a restaurant seating a maximum of 20 people and initially serving dinner only. No parking is required.

Processing Requirements: A Conditional Use Permit, for which an application has been filed.

Processing History: Staff is preparing its report for the Planning Commission. RCPC wrote to the Commission expressing concern about the project's potential parking impacts on the neighborhood and because a dinner-only restaurant would not support a major aim of College Avenue's C-31 zoning – promoting daytime pedestrian activity and commerce along the Avenue. The owner has indicated his interest in working with neighbors to resolve these issues, including encouraging restaurant employees to use public transit or park in the BART lot, negotiating shared parking for customers in the lot at the corner of College and Kales, and working towards being open for lunch as well as dinner.

■ Zoning Update — Lower Temescal/Telegraph Corridor

Project Description: Revisions to General Plan and zoning maps and the Zoning Ordinance in the Temescal neighborhood and Telegraph Avenue from 41st Street to Alcatraz Avenue. Portions of Claremont Avenue, from Telegraph to Clifton, are included. Also proposed are revisions to the C-28 zone, conversion of portions of C-28 to C-30, and new Design Guidelines and Combining Zones (zoning overlays) specific to the study area. The intent is to make the zoning in the area more directly implement the General Plan.

Processing History: The Planning Commission's Zoning Update Committee (ZUC) approved the staff report with some revisions. Importantly for Rockridge, they agreed to preserve the C-28 zoning on Claremont from Telegraph to Clifton, and apply a Neighborhood Center Mixed Use (NCMU) General Plan designation to this area of Claremont. NCMU is also the designation for College Avenue. The ZUC agreed to apply to this area of Claremont an overlay zone that reinforces the provisions of NCMU.

Accompanying the zoning changes along Telegraph between 52nd Street and Route 24 (changing the existing C-28 back to the old C-30), the committee approved staff's proposed zoning changes to C-28 that would remove the requirement for ground floor retail/commercial, making the existing C-28 from Route 24 to 63rd Street along Telegraph into high-density residential only. Staff is preparing a report for the Planning Commission. After these issues are addressed at the full commission hearing on January 16, the City will prepare an EIR for the Temescal update and all other updates in Oakland. This is expected to take a year; the update and EIR will then go to the City Council.

Rockridge News Block Captain Needed

If you live above Broadway and have 10 minutes to spare monthly, we have the perfect paper route for you: Route 07F, replacing block captains Larry and Melissa Moss. The route covers both sides of Mendocino from Margarido to Lawton. Call Susan at 547-3855 or email her at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer or for more information.

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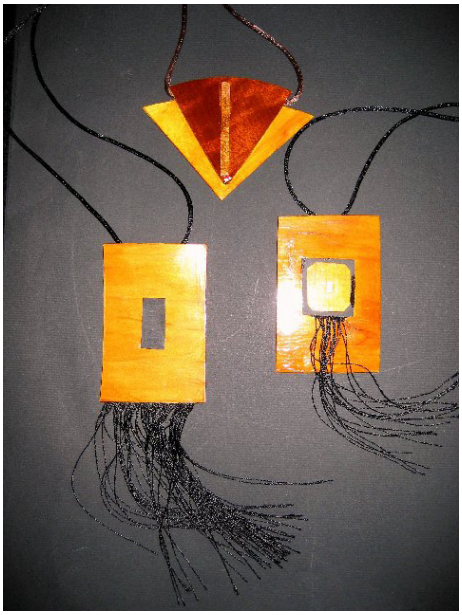
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Happy Holidays to One and All!

Holiday Art

December without a Rockridge open studio is really unthinkable. Indeed, five talented artists are showing their work on Saturday and Sunday, December 8 and 9. Warren Brown is showing paintings at 6156 Rockridge Boulevard S. Diane Jacobson, art glass and jewelry, and Heli Perrett, wood jewelry are welcoming you together at 5568 Kales. Liz Maxwell is offering paintings and prints at her home at 5808 Chabot Road. And Wendy Yoshimura is offering her magnificent watercolors, prints and cards at 474 43rd Street (above Telegraph). All events are open 12-5 p.m.



THE Rockridge MUSE

by Ortrun Niesar

On other weekends you might want to venture further afield to visit arts and crafts fairs as well as more open studios. Berkeley Artisans Holiday Open Studios will be open the first three weekends of December, from 11-6 p.m.

▶ ***Steps***
Oil on canvas
48" x 19"
– Liz Maxwell

◀ ***Geo Jewels***
Wearable wood art/ jewelery (each piece unique).
– Heli Perrett



Look for maps for this event and many others at public art venues, including Blick Art Store on Broadway and at Pro Arts Gallery in Jack London Square. One thing for sure: you will be giving a gift like no other. And our local artists will thank you.

Holiday Music

Here is a musical treat: The Bay Area Classical Harmonies (BACH) will be presenting Handel's *Messiah* in its entirety on Friday, December 7, 7 p.m. at Arlington Community Church, 52 Arlington Avenue, Kensington. The chorus is composed of 60 professional performers from the Bay Area. Call 510/868-0695 or visit www.bayareabach.org for more information and other performance dates.

A Reminder: The final performance of Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* by the Berkeley Community Chorus is Sunday, December 16, 4:30 p.m, at St. Joseph The Worker Church, 1640 Addison Street, Berkeley. Admission is free; donations are appreciated. This is your last chance to hear your neighbors sing this wonderful work.

And: If you are a singer you may want to know that the University Chamber Chorus is open to anyone in the extended University of California community. You must be an experienced singer and there are auditions, but once you are there, what wonderful resources for your own musical education are available to you, free! Go to http://music.berkeley.edu/chorus.html for more information and rehearsal schedules.

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Street Trees Offer Proven Benefits

by Annette Floystrup, RCPC board member

Special thanks to contributors Dan Gallagher, arborist with the City of Oakland Public Works Department, and community activist Liz Dunn of Seattle.

Why should you as a Rockridge resident care about whether there are trees on your street, or on the streets nearby? Well, besides the obvious — that they make a street look more attractive — street trees provide numerous benefits to residents in terms of property values, traffic calming, pedestrian friendliness, and crime reduction. Community trees are the only element of the urban infrastructure that actually appreciate in value.

Street trees benefit the environment

Trees consume carbon dioxide and emit oxygen. In general, the more trees we plant, the better the air we breathe. A generous urban tree canopy reduces the heat island effect of our streets, sidewalks, houses and other hardscape, significantly reducing air temperature. Old neighborhoods of Sacramento with many street trees are on average 15 degrees cooler in the summer than newer built areas. (A discussion of urban heat islands can be found on the EPA website under What Can Be Done – Trees and Vegetation. http://www.epa.gov/hiri/index.html.) Street trees also reduce stormwater runoff and provide valuable habitat for urban wildlife.

Street trees cut traffic noise

Street trees reduce the amount of engine noise created in the first place, because drivers go more slowly. But a line of large leafy trees can also absorb a great deal of noise. Even a line of smaller trees can be enough of a buffer to block traffic noise from reaching private yards and homes.

Cars drive more slowly on streets with trees

In his book "Great Streets," the internationally known urban planner Alan B. Jacobs notes that wide streets where the buildings are small and set back lose their definition, unless this effect is mitigated by lining the street with trees. Otherwise it feels like a transportation corridor, not a place where people live. Jacobs also cites research showing that for many people, trees are the most important single characteristic of a "good street." Traffic moves more slowly on streets lined with trees. Trees have a calming effect, and drivers are at least subconsciously aware that where there are trees, there are often pedestrians and children playing.

There is room to plant street trees along our arterials, even if it requires creating or widening planting strips between sidewalk and street. Most major arterials were built wider than they needed to be, decades ago, before urban planners understood that wider streets encourage drivers to go faster because they don't have to pay as careful attention to where they are going.

Street trees enhance the feeling of community

The whole neighborhood benefits when people get out of their houses to walk. Residents are more likely to meet up regularly with their neighbors, keep an eye on each other's property, use their local parks and patronize local businesses. Trees provide an environment in which it is more pleasant to walk — something attractive and green to look at, shade in the summer, a canopy from rain in the winter.

Street trees increase property values

In his book "City Comforts," urban plan-

▪ Trees, page 11

Q. and A.: Things to Know About Street Trees

■ **What is the best time of year to plant a street tree?**

The City plants trees all year round. Each species is a bit different, but in our moderate climate, the vast majority of trees succeed no matter when they are planted. The success rate is 90% plus. Many of the failures can be attributed to poor after-care.

■ **How much space do I need between the sidewalk and the curb to have a street tree?**

The City will cut a hole in the sidewalk if necessary. Generally, a 2'x3' hole is the minimum. To meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, a 4-foot clearance from the private property line to the edge of the tree hole must be provided.

■ **Can I plant any tree I want in front of my house?**

No. Only specific tree species listed on the website www.oaklandpw.com/Asset1099.aspx are designated street trees, among them old favorites such as Trident Maples and Aristocrat Pears, as well as a few surprises like *Arbutus unedo*, the Strawberry Tree.

Tree type and size is determined by restrictions including overhead utility wires, ADA compliance, street signs, utility poles, utility meters and wires, gas and sewer lines and other under grounded utilities plus clearances and hole size. Homeowners are not usually equipped to make tree selection evaluations based on all these criteria.

▪ More Trees Q. & A., page 11

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Kobi age 5


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Emma age 11

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FROG Park Corner

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



Nila Kim, newly hired aide to Jane Brunner, toured FROG Park with FROG Chair Jennifer Cooper. The two discussed key issues for FROG, including the new permanent restroom at Hardy Park, creek flow initiatives, and housing development affecting the greenbelt/park. At right, Kim and Cooper inspect existing restroom facilities at the park. Story page 1.



New Staff

from page 1

has already met with Rockridge Merchant (RDA) representatives, and recently toured Oakland's first LEED Gold certified home, which is being built on Margarido Drive in Rockridge. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification provides verification that a building project meets the highest green building and sustainability measures.

FROG Park Tour

On a recent rainy Monday, Kim toured FROG Park with FROG Chair Jennifer Cooper. The two discussed key upcoming issues for FROG including the new permanent restroom at Hardy Park, creek flow initiatives, housing development issues affecting the greenbelt/park, the Caldecott Tunnel 4th Bore, and a planned greenbelt extension from Hudson Street to the BART parking lot. The pair topped off their tour with lunch; a fried chicken sandwich at Bakesale Betty on Telegraph. Said Kim, "Wow! This sandwich is amazing!"

Staff Shifts

In other changes at Brunner's office, Senior Advisor Justin Horner left to take a position with the Natural Resources Defense Council in San Francisco. Elinor Buchen, a North Oaklander, has joined the office, replacing Horner as senior advisor and legislative analyst.

Zac Wald, who has been with Brunner's office for many years, has been promoted to chief of staff.


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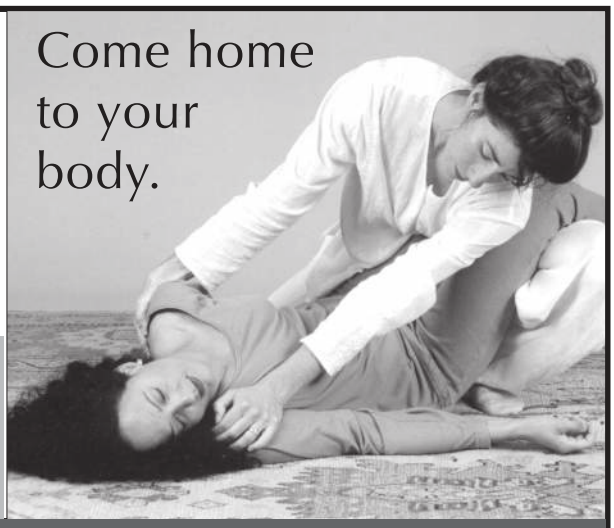
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Fourth Bore Suit

from page 1

hospitals] in Rockridge like FROG Park, Chabot Elementary and Claremont Middle School; a failure to address the substantial construction impacts that will result from five years of six-days-a-week, 24-hour-a-day construction and drilling affecting the heavily populated west side of the hills; a failure to consider noise and air pollution effects from induced demand.

When Caltrans reissued its report in September 2007, none of the concerns submitted during the original comment period were addressed. This led to the filing of the lawsuit by the FBC, and significant pressure from the City of Oakland. The lawsuit states that, among other violations, Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) arbitrarily concluded that the proposed project would have no significant impact on those living near Highway 24, even though it is clear from the environmental documents that there will be increases in noise, pollution and traffic. The suit asserts that Caltrans and the FHA failed to assess adverse impacts of the proposed project upon schools, parks, and hospitals along Highway 24; failed to assess alternatives, such as boring exclusively from the east, where there are no residences to be affected by noise, pollution or traffic increases; failed to adopt feasible mitigation measures to lessen the negative impacts of the proposed project; and failed to respond to the numerous comments made by FBC and other groups and by local governments about the environmental documents, even though required by law to do so.

RCPC and FROG joined the FBC not to stop the project, but to insure that it is constructed with the fewest possible negative impacts to Rockridge residents, students attending schools along Highway 24 and users of FROG Park. Rockridge is at ground zero of what will be the largest highway construction project in the area in decades: the short- and long-term neighborhood impacts need to be properly addressed.

RCPC and FROG are concerned that although Caltrans claims there will be "no significant impacts" from the project, Caltrans has already admitted there will be significant increased noise during construction and that a constant stream of trucks will operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., taking construction equipment to the worksite and hauling away rock drilled from the tunnel. Along with increased noise from the increased truck traffic and heavy construction, those trucks would haul their debris loads via the Broadway exit, seriously affecting traffic, bike and pedestrian safety along Broadway every day but Sunday.

Post-construction, Caltrans' own outside sound expert has stated that, following the completion of the Fourth Bore, there will be an increase in noise along Highway 24 from the west portal of the Caldecott Tunnel to beyond Oakland Children's Hospital. It is reasonable to assume that more vehicles will mean more pollution along Highway 24, and that this pollution will affect the many children attending schools and playing at the parks along Highway 24. It is also reasonable to assume that more vehicles on Highway 24 will affect traffic on Rockridge streets.

The RCPC and FROG believe these issues need to be addressed before construction begins.

The FBC has agreed to delay beginning litigation for two months so that it and Caltrans can attempt to resolve these issues. We will provide regular updates in The Rockridge News.

For more information or comments, please contact Ellen Peterson at tigersma@comcast.net.

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Trees

from page 8

ner and author David Sucher says, "Even streets of modest houses gain a grandeur and presence when treed. Old money need not be the only ones to have old trees." Streets with trees look more stable and prosperous. Families with children are more attracted to a neighborhood where they can picture themselves going for walks and letting kids play on the sidewalk. A neighborhood that looks cared for, with visible sidewalk activity, experiences less crime, especially fewer break-ins. Of course, it is important to select a tree species that will thrive with minimal maintenance and will not block sunlight and views.

Sucher estimates that street trees can boost the value of each home on the street by at least $1,000 to $5,000. In their pamphlet "Benefits of Trees," the International Society of Arboriculture estimates that the improvement in curb appeal due to street trees increases real estate values by 5-20%.

In 2007, Oakland received its 23rd consecutive Tree City USA designation from The National Arbor Day Foundation.

MORE Q. and A.: Things to Know About Street Trees

■ **If I go through the City's sidewalk tree service, can I choose my tree?**

Up to a point, but uniformity is preferred. In some areas, the existing street trees have become problematic. Then, trees with similar size and growth habits are planted to preserve uniformity.

■ **If the City plants a tree and it damages the sidewalk or curb, am I liable for the repairs?**

No. The City will make a temporary safety patch, then prioritize repair by safety and severity. Homeowners must call if there are problems caused by the street tree. The same is true for sewer lines; if the homeowner can prove the street tree roots caused the problem, the City is liable for repairs.

■ **If I plant a tree on my own and it damages the sidewalk or curb, am I liable for repairs?**

Yes. City planted trees are designated "official" trees, and homeowner planted trees are "unofficial." If a homeowner plants an additional tree on his own next to an official tree, BOTH trees become unofficial, and the homeowner assumes liability for damage caused by either or both trees.

■ **If my official tree needs trimming or other care, who do I call? If a street tree causes problems, whether it is an official tree or not, who do I call?**

Call the City of Oakland Tree Center, 615-5850, with an explanation of the circumstances. An inspector will assess the situation. This can take time; there are two inspectors and approximately 40,000 street trees.

Tree supervisor/tree coordinator Robert Zahn was my source for this article.



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11/16/2007	2	1	5439 Claremont	$410,000	$410,000	$420,000	30
11/21/2007	2	2	391 Alcatraz	$587,900	$569,900	$569,000	92
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Rockridge Ecologist Restores a Rainforest

by Brendan Havenar-Daughton

With coffee prices recently falling to an all-time low, small-scale coffee farmers in Costa Rica are forced to cut down the trees and shift from coffee to cattle. The coffee trees provide substantial habitat for birds, bats and butterflies, while steep hillsides devoid of trees lead to soil erosion, flooding, habitat loss and eventual ecosystem failure. This is just one of the issues I studied while pursuing an environmental studies degree at UC Santa Cruz.

The depressing state of our global environment led me to take action. With two friends I founded Finca Project (*finca* means farm in Spanish), a non-profit serving communities in Costa Rica. The organization facilitates the recuperation of human and ecological communities through small-scale reforestation projects and environmental education in local schools. We raised $6,000 the first year to build the community tree nursery. Since then we have germinated, distributed and planted over 10,000 native tree seedlings with the local community.

We have also developed a unique cultural immersion program for students seeking an internship. Student interns stay with local families and experience community life as participants rather than mere observers. This social integration facilitates strong relationships between students and community members. With the help of our interns, we have developed an innovative, project-based environmental curriculum for the local elementary and high school.

Our neighbors in Rockridge, the progressive community in which I was raised, often find themselves at the forefront of environmental activism across the globe. Not only does our privilege often allow us to take action, it makes it our responsibility. Our community is one of the most unique in the world and has the potential to set trends for urban centers everywhere. If we hope to make a difference and set an example for our children, we must take action ourselves as well as get the kids involved!



◀ Brendan Havernar-Daughton, at left in photo, grows and distributes native tree saplings to community members in Copa Buena, Costa Rica.

PHOTO: BRENDAN HAVERNAR-DAUGHTON

If there were projects in the world that could greatly reduce our ecological impact as a community — hands-on projects that would educate our children while offsetting our carbon emissions, perhaps inspiring other communities around the world — would we be interested?

Finca Project may hold just such potential for Rockridge. To learn more about the work of Finca Project, visit our website at www.fincaproject.org. Contact Brendan at 510/414-0957 or Brendan@fincaproject.com. See the Community Calendar, page 15, for Finca Project Video Screening.

Editor's Note: Before going off to UC Santa Cruz and eventually the rainforests of Costa Rica, Brendan delivered The Rockridge News in his neighborhood for more than 10 years. He is the son of long-time Rockridge activist Patrick Daughton.

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by Theresa Nelson

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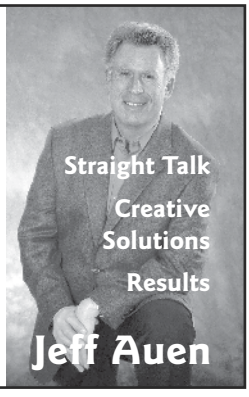
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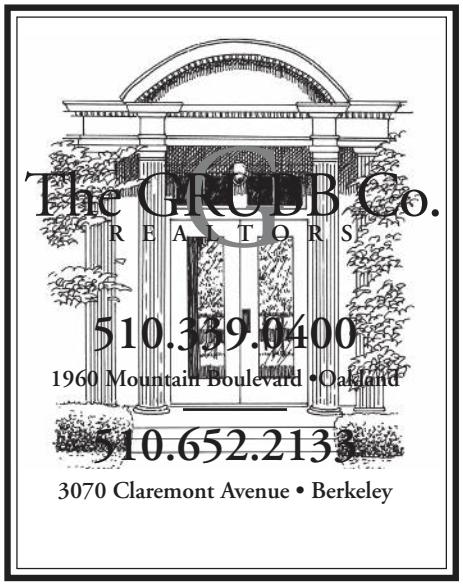
Utilities included, sunny and light, new paint and carpet, lobby buzzer system. Located at corner of Claremont (#6067) and College. For info or to see, contact Mike Mee, 707/785-3999, meemike@yahoo.com.

Stylist Needed

Bright and friendly salon seeks stylists for full or part-time chair rental. Please contact Jennie at Milagro Salon, 5269 Broadway at College Ave. 510/601-8384.

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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

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

∂**SPECIAL NOTICE: Forgiveness for Fines, Fees and Lost Books.** Come to any Oakland Public Library through December 14 and get a fresh start. We will forgive all fines and fees for overdue or lost items (except for tools from the Tool Lending Library), and welcome you back to the Library. For more info call 238-3134.

FOR CHILDREN:

- ✯ **Toddler Story Time:** 1st and 2nd Saturdays, 10:30am: 12/8, 1/5.
- ✯ **Pre-School Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am: 12/19, 1/2.
- ✯ **Pajama Story Time:** 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7pm: 12/11, 1/8.

Special Events for Kids and Families:

- ✯ Drop by any time starting 1/8 through 1/31 to make paper snowflakes or experiment with Kirigami. Get supplies, patterns and instructions at the Children's Reference Desk.

FOR TEENS:

- ✯ **Anime Club: Teens 13 and up,** watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation) with other teens. 2nd Tuesday of each month, from 5 to 6:30pm, upstairs meeting room. Meet 12/11 to watch *Full Metal Alchemist: Conqueror of Shamballa*.
- ✯ **Jewelry Making Workshop**: Local designer and entrepreneur **Chelsee Robinson** will guide you in making your own beautiful jewelry in this free, fun, hands-on workshop. Tuesday, 12/18, 4 to 5:30pm. Sign up now; registration required. Call 597-5017 to register or get more info from Susy, Teen Specialist Librarian.

FOR ADULTS:

- ✯ **Writers' Support /Critique Group**: ALL writers welcome. Third Saturday of each month (12/15) from 1 to 5pm. Bring up to 5 pages of your prose for on-site reading/discussion. Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch (www.berkeley-writersclub.org/). For more info: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.
- ✯ **Knitting Classes for Seniors** (50+): with instructor **Teri Barr**. All levels welcome. Beginners bring light color yarn and a pair of size 8 needles. If experienced, bring projects to work on. Tuesdays, 12:30-2:30pm, upstairs meeting room.
- ✯ **Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice**. First Tuesday of each month, 6- 8pm. Advance sign-up starts 5pm.

ART EXHIBITS

Gallery: December: Photographs by **Chris Jennings,** Oakland library staff member.

January: **John Baldwin**: mixed media figurative and abstract works.

Lobby Display Case: December: Kwanzaa display. January: **Paul Robeson Centennial Committee** display.

LIBRARY HOURS:
Mon. and Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.
Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 10am to 5:30pm.
Fri., 12 to 5:30pm. Closed Sundays.
OPEN on Mon., Dec 31 from 10am to 5:30 pm and **CLOSED**: Mon. and Tues., Dec. 24 and 25 and Tues., Jan. 1, 2008.

Peralta Elementary School Kindergarten Open House

Weds, Jan 16 at 6:45 pm.460 63rd Street. Meet the principal and kindergarten teachers and learn about our instructional programs. RSVP for childcare during Open House, call 879-1450. School tours are now available on alternating Mondays and Thursdays. Call 879-1450 to schedule a tour. More info at www.peraltaschool.org. Info on Oakland Unified School District's Open Enrollment procedures at OUSD's student assignment office at 879-8111.

Finca Project Meeting

Rockridge environmentalist **Brendan Havenar-Daughton** will show a documentary about reforestation projects and reducing ecological damage to communities in Costa Rica (**see story on page 12)**. Share freshly brewed Costa Rican coffee and conversation about the great potential of a Rockridge Rainforest Reserve. Older children are welcome to attend and learn about internship opportunities where they live and work with Costa Rican families and participate in community projects. Tuesday, 12/18, 6:30 to 7:30pm at the Rockridge library, 5366 College Ave. More info at www.fincaproject.org or Brendan: 414-0957 or Brendan@fincaproject.com.

St. Albert Priory Christmas Concert

The combined ensembles of the Schola Cantorum of St. Albert Priory, the Women's Antique Vocal Ensemble (WAVE), the Renaissance instrumental ensemble Alta Sonora with guitar and organ presents *From the Rising of the Sun*, a performance of music for the Christmas season. Saturday, 12/22 at 8pm. $15 and $10 students/seniors. St Albert Priory Chapel, 6172 Chabot Road. More info: Fr. Chris Renz, 596-1800.

"A Joyful Holiday Noise"

All welcome to come and sing with our Christmas choir at College Avenue Presbyterian Church. Rehearsals are Fridays, 12/7, 12/14, 12/21 from 7:30 to 9pm and Saturday 12/22 from 2 to 5pm. Performances are Sunday morning, 12/23 and Christmas Eve, 12/24 at 6pm. 5951 College Ave. Call Danny Halford: 415/673-9139.

Amahl and the Night Visitors

One-act opera by Gian-Carlo Menotti. The cast will include two boy soloists from the Pacific Boychoir Academy, conducted by **James Gilman**. Friday, 12/7 at 8pm and Sunday, 12/9 at 3pm. St. Augustine Catholic Church, 400 Alcatraz Ave., between College and Telegraph. Free (donations welcomed). Wheelchair accessible; free parking in church parking lots. More info: 653-8631 or Karen Miller, kmm8006@gmail.com.

Holiday Performances at the Julia Morgan Center

- ✯ **The Nutcracker**: presented by the **Berkeley Ballet Theater (BBT)**. Guest artists from prestigious ballet companies will perform the male leads; other leading roles performed by BBT's acclaimed Youth Company. Fridays 12/7 and 12/14, 7pm; Saturdays 12/8 and 12/15, 2pm and 7pm; Sundays 12/9 and 12/16, 2pm. The Sugar Plum Party will follow the Saturday matinee performances. Tickets ($16 -$22 and $5 extra for Sugar Plum Party). Call BBT Box Office at 843-4689.
- ✯ **Will Durst Presents: Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show**: A night of hilarity combining standup, improv and sketches giving a big raspberry to 2007. Joining Will are J**im Short, Johnny Steele, Debi Durst, Michael Bossier, Steven Kravitz** and **Arthur Gaus** who come to "mock and scoff and taunt with taste." As with all live comedy shows, some language may not be suitable for younger audiences. Tickets: adults $20; students/seniors $18. CBON Ticket Line; 925/798-1300.

Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, 2640 College Ave. Berkeley. Info: Marilyn Stanley, 845-8542 x301 or marilyn@juliamorgan.org.

Los Hilos de la Vida/ Threads of Life

Free exhibit of 49 Latina-themed folkloric story quilts by women and children of the Mendocino County co-operative. Show runs through Dec. 20 at The Women's Cancer Resource Center Gallery, 5741 Telegraph Ave. Gallery hours: Mon –Fri, 9am to 5pm. Wheelchair accessible. 420-7900; www.wcrc.org.

Bambino Thrift Shop Holiday Season

Do your holiday shopping and benefit Children's Hospital. now through Dec. 21. Tuesday - Friday, 10am to 3pm; Saturday, 12 to 4pm. 5290 College Ave., 658-7473.

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