THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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

Agenda: RCPC March Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, March 20, 7:30 p.m., Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Avenue at Manila, Community Room (Upstairs)

- **RCPC Presents Storyteller Gay Ducey: Spinning Straw Into Gold; Using Stories in Community and Family Life.**

Gay Ducey presents a workshop that will encourage folks to try telling stories, as opposed to reading them.

Gay says, "Everyone has stories. Whether we gather children to tell a tale at home, shoot the breeze with the neighbors, or linger at the water cooler, we all spin yarns. Telling stories is easy to do, and important. Stories introduce us, define us and help us understand ourselves and others.

Spend a Thursday evening with a master storyteller and educator who will give you tips about how to recall, collect, and tell family stories and traditional tales. No formal experience necessary or desirable. Prerequisites? Yes: Life experience and a free evening; you have both of those already.

- **RCPC Open Forum, including Land Use Committee updates**

City Council to Consider Fee Increase in Residential Permit Parking Program

An increase in Residential Permit Parking (RPP) fees has been recommended by the city's Finance and Management Agency to meet program costs. If approved by the City Council, renewals would increase to $50 from $15; new permits would increase to $30 from $17.50 (or $60 from $25, depending on registration date).

View the Agency's resolution on-line at http://clerkwebsvr1.oaklandnet.com/attachments/17818.pdf, or contact Jane Brunner's office at jbrunner@oaklandnet.com (copy to RCPC: info@rockridge.org) or phone 238-7001 for more information and hearing dates. (See Letters, page 4.)

Report: February Town Hall Meeting

Community, RCPC Board Scope Rockridge Issues for Coming Year

by Don Kinkead, Editor

Invited to comment on the issues facing Rockridge, and how they would want the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) board of directors to prioritize them, attendees at the RCPC Town Hall Meeting held February 21 did not hold back. From planning issues to crime in Rockridge to changes in the RCPC bylaws, audience members peppered the boardmembers with questions and comments.

Safeway's proposal to build a new, larger store and parking area on its present College Avenue site was high on the list of most attendees.

"This thing terrifies me," said Patrick Ansari, owner of The Meadows flower shop on College, directly across from Safeway. "Closing the driveways [presently opening onto College across from Cole Coffee and the Bank of America] would hurt local businesses. Now, customers can park and shop at Safeway, then come to our businesses across the street. That won't happen if the driveways are closed."

Noting RCPC's commitment to a pedestrian-friendly retail-commercial area, boardmembers said RCPC has met several times with Safeway representatives. Some suggestions by RCPC for a design more in

Rockridge Issues, page 3

NCPC Forum Highlights Crime Prevention Through Intervention and Redirection

Measure Y program representatives speak at the Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) Town Hall, February 28, held at the Rockridge Branch Library. More than 30 Measure Y programs receive $6.4 million funding each year to steer youth, young adults and released prisoners in postive directions. Panel members below, from left: Charles Turner, Oakland Private Industry Council; Tony Crear, Alameda County Probation Department; Michelle Clark-Clough, Youth Employment Partnership; Celsa Senad, Mentoring Center; Demetria Huntsman, Peacemakers.

Visit www.oaklandnet.com to learn more about Measure Y and its use in fighting crime.

Measure Y: Helping in the Fight Against Crime



PHOTO: SUSAN MONTAUK

In My Opinion

Get Involved: Fight Crime

by Vivek Bhatia

Many years ago, I was having a particularly difficult time at work. My manager told me something that's stuck with me to this day: "Everything in life goes in cycles," she said. "The difficulty is in finding the right perspective to recognize it. Only when you recognize the cycle can you decide what actions to take in order to minimize the time you spend in the downturns."

Well, there's no question about it: Rockridge is in a downward cycle as far as crime is concerned. Since January 1, 2008, the crime rate has been the worst it has been in the last two-and-a-half years, as measured by Oakland Police Department crime reports. We've had an average of 26 crime reports per week in the first five weeks of the year, compared to a per week average of 14 in 2007 and 11 in 2006.

I've been following this subject to see if I could spot the cycle, and see what we could do to reverse the trend. Below are the four most important factors I found, in order of importance:

Keep an eye out for yourself and for each other

The most important thing you can do about crime is to keep an eye out for yourself and for your neighbors. • Don't leave valuables in your car in plain sight. • Lock your doors. • Trim your bushes back, so muggers can't hide behind them. • Keep exterior lights on at night. • Watch for and report suspicious cars in your neighborhood. (A man suspected of 30 North Oakland robberies was caught after someone saw a strange car in the neighborhood, watched the suspect jump in and drive off, and wrote down the license plate number, which the police used to find him.)

Get more engaged in our local community

Get involved online, attend community meetings, or both. We have two Yahoo groups focusing on Rockridge (RockridgeCommunityOnline and RockridgeNeigborhoodWatchNetwork) and two local community organizations – the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) and the Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC).

Demand more active leadership and better communication from our elected leaders

Phone, write or e-mail the Mayor (238-3141) and City Councilmembers (Jane Brunner: 238-7001) with your concerns and ideas, and ask for regular updates.

OPD needs to reach its officer staffing target

Oakland currently has fewer than 730 police officers, short of its staffing goal of 803. Oakland's Police Academy, one of the country's finest, has a high dropout rate. Graduates who leave to serve in other localities coupled with routine retirements makes reaching this goal more difficult. From my research, one thing is clear: without the full complement of 803 officers, we are not going to beat our crime problems.

Whether you agree or disagree with my thoughts, I ask each of you to get involved in solving the Rockridge crime problem. Attend the NCPC and RCPC meetings, join the Yahoo groups, and contact our elected officials to make your opinion known. United we stand, and Oakland is a mighty city that deserves to stand tall and proud.

Rockridge resident Vivek Bhatia is founder and webmaster of www.rockridgresidents.org. The site's slogan is "By the Residents, For the Residents."

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Sunday: **CLOSED**
Library program details: See Calendar, page 15.

The Rockridge News

The Rockridge News, founded in 1986 by Don Kinkead, is published monthly in Oakland and is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), a nonprofit 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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- Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in ***The Rockridge News***?
- Do you have questions about newsletter distribution?
- Want to volunteer to be a ***Rockridge News*** block captain?
- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

Contact us at one of the following:
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
Publication date of the next issue is
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Rockridge Issues

from page 1

the style of existing College Avenue shops were challenged by Safeway. Boardmembers emphasized RCPC concerns about the size and design of the proposed store and parking lot and agreed that parking would be a difficult problem to solve.

Attendees with backgrounds in architecture stressed Safeway's opportunity to create a unique urban design for this store. Architect Larry Meyers said the Union 76 gas station site at College and Claremont, to be a part of the new facility, was on a "'100 percent corner,' meaning it has access and exposure, assets that should not be wasted by routine design."

Audience members were referred to recent issues of The Rockridge News posted on the RCPC website at www.rockridge.org and were encouraged to comment at landuse@rockridge.org. Safeway consultants Aroner, Jewel & Ellis maintain a website for comments, as well: www.safewayoncollege.com.

Crime in Rockridge and Oakland also concerned those at the meeting. Oakland Police Officer Norman Del Rosario, Beat Officer for Beat 12X (Rockridge), discussed reports of crime and how police respond. Del Rosario explained that he handles calls for beat issues such as aggressive panhandlers, trespassers, and suspicious circumstances, "the quality-of-life issues." He said that calls to police at 777-3333 for non-emergencies or 777-3211 for emergencies are responded to in order of seriousness. For example, crimes in progress get a response from any officer taking the call. Del Rosario works from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. He can be reached by e-mail at ndelrosario@oaklandnet.com.

A proposed change in RCPC boardmember term limits drew questions from the audience. RCPC legal advisor John Gussman explained that the by-law change, if approved, would actually limit board power by reducing its discretion to refuse a board candidate the right to run for a seat. In the subsequent vote at the meeting by written ballot, the measure was approved: Boardmembers who have served three consecutive elected terms will not be eligible to stand again for election, unless there was a break in the boardmember's actual service within those elected terms, as described in Bylaws section 8.3(d), or until at least one annual election cycle has passed since the end of the boardmember's last elected term. No other term limits will apply.

Several audience members expressed concern about the potential for changes to College Avenue if a proposal by the Rockridge District Association to create a "community benefit district" succeeds. Such a district could shift important decision-making power to a few large College Avenue property owners such as BART/CalTrans, Safeway, ASR Tx Lease (the Trader Joe's site), Wilson Associates (Market Hall, etc.) and Dreyer's, (see The Rockridge News, October 2007).

The outcome of that proposal is not known. RCPC boardmembers noted the group is working with the City to resolve inconsistencies in zoning regulations and provide stronger zoning guidelines. No changes are currently planned for College Avenue, the boardmembers said.

The March Town Hall meeting features storyteller Gay Ducey who will present "Using Stories in Community and Family Life." A graduate of UC Berkeley's Library School, Ms. Ducey is the children's librarian at the Rockridge Branch Library, and the staff trainer for volunteer storytellers at Oakland Head Start programs. The Commission on the Status of Women recently named her one of the "Outstanding Women of Berkeley." Details in agenda box, page 1.

Library Friends Seek Board Candidates for April Election

by Karen Carlson, FORL co-chair

The Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) board of directors is looking for a few new board members. We meet four times a year, our work is interesting and useful, and the company is wonderful.

The mission of the board is to champion the Rockridge Branch Library; to create and stimulate public enthusiasm and interest in library programs; and to advocate for the library to the community and government bodies. FORL seeks to generate new ideas for the enhancement of library facilities and programs, and to encourage volunteers and gifts to the library. In general, we foster continued support for the library's ability to respond to and serve the needs of our diverse population.



FORL's annual election will be held at the April 17 meeting of RCPC.

For more information, contact either FORL co-chair Karen Carlson at KarenCarls@sbcglobal.net, 654-0588; or Carol Bieri cbieri@pacbell.net, 547-5660.

No photos or speeches required. Shy and retiring bookworms are welcome.

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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.

Proposed Residential Permit Parking Fee Increase is Outrageous!

Editor:

Attached is a copy of an e-mail I sent to the city of Oakland and to Jane Brunner regarding the City Council's proposed permit parking fee increase. The increase would raise the cost of the initial parking permit to $60 from the current $25 (depending on when purchased; and the cost for annual renewals to $50 from $15. Ms. Brunner's office replied, saying the council had not yet taken a position on the proposal.

Dear Ms. Brunner:

I attended last night's meeting at the Rockridge Library (February 20) regarding the proposed increase in parking permit fees. I was struck by the total lack of organization of the presenters: they kept referring the audience to an RPP report but had no copies. They had no idea how many blocks were included in each "parking technician's" jurisdiction or beat. They did not know how many technicians they had out on the streets, how often those technicians patrolled their beat, how many tickets were written by each technician, or how much money was received from fines. They stated that this division of their department had lost over $147,000 but could not say whether that loss was accumulated over a number of years or if it was a full tally of losses for this fiscal year. They also were not able to produce a copy of their "calculations" or explain how they came up with the new permit fee amounts. They contend that to make the parking permit division profitable, they need to raise the rates. When we asked if the City Council would make a two-tiered program for permit parking, lowering the fees for senior citizens, the handicapped and retired people all living on fixed incomes, we were told, "No! The City Council decided not to do that." When we asked why the City Council made that decision, we were told that there was no explanation. That is intolerable! To me it looks as if the permit parking division is trying to make up for its incompetence by throwing money at their disorganization. This will not do! Under no circumstances should we, the public, be asked to accept an outrageous increase in fees with no end of incompetence in sight.

— Diana Mitchell-Chavez

Proposed Permit Parking Fee Hike Unjustified

Editor:

I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed fee hike from $15 to $50 for Residential Permit Parking. I sometimes wonder if the City has declared war on its citizens, seeking every opportunity to squeeze more money out of us.

I have participated in the permit program for two years and I see few efforts at enforcement. Will a higher cost bring better enforcement? The city should collect the money it can through proper enforcement before raising the rates. A 300% increase is otherwise unjustifiable.

— Ted Radosevich

RCPC, the Fourth Bore Coalition and Livability

Editor:

One of the many things most Western European visitors to America find particularly startling is the experience of driving along our freeways and being able to look directly at nearby residential buildings. In Europe, protecting residential peace and quiet from freeway noise is taken very seriously. Thorough separation by combinations of broad fields, forests, berms, below-grade routing, and/or effective soundwalls (and even special "quiet night" speed limits) is strictly mandated.

Forty-five years ago the construction of Highway 24, an elevated freeway built right through Temescal Canyon and the Rockridge and Temescal Districts, one of the most attractive areas in the East Bay, seriously diminished livability. Although we citizens have politely numbed ourselves to the reality of Third World noise levels, the planned fourth bore of the Cladecott Tunnel will indeed invite an increase in traffic that will make things worse.

RCPC and the Fourth Bore Coalition are to be commended for having filed suit against Caltrans for its failure to consider wider environmental impacts, and all citizens should rally in support of this effort.

Such things as lounging outdoors, listening to the calls of birds, and meditating to the rustle of the breeze are not frivolous pleasures. The quiet enjoyment of your home is your legal right.

— Ray Perman

RCPC E-Mail List: Timely Information Direct to You

The RCPC is happy to announce that an e-mail tree has been established to notify you about upcoming events on the RCPC calendar, including RCPC Town Hall Meetings and Land Use Committee Meetings.

To join this e-mail notification system, simply send your e-mail address to info@rockridge.org and you'll be added to our list. You can expect to receive no more than two e-mails a month and your information will be kept confidential. E-mail addresses provided will not be shared and will be used by the RCPC for official notifications only.



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The Zoning Counter

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

400 Avon Street

Proposal: To convert four residential dwelling units into four residential condominium units.
Contact/ John E. Gutierrez, Esq.
Phone: 510/647-0600
Owner: Michelle Vasey
Permits Required: Tentative Parcel Map for condominium purposes.
Planner: Caesar Quitevis, 510/238-6343 or clquitevis@oaklandnet.com

5148 Broadway

Proposal: Replace 5 existing Bank of America business signs with new signs.
Contact/ Matt Sieck, Sign Productions
Phone: 319/364-6697
Owner: Property Development Associates
Permits Required: Design Review to replace approximately 170 square feet of total sign area at a shopping center. Variance to allow the total signage to exceed the total permitted aggregate sign area of 200 square feet.
Planner: Holly Pearson, 510/238-3079 or hpearson@oaklandnet.com

6391 Hillegass Avenue

Proposal: To convert four residential dwelling units into four residential condominium units.
Contact/ Kristen Personett
Phone: 510/697-4289
Eli Israel and Michelle Medeiros
Permits Required: Tentative Parcel Map for condominium purposes.
Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Property (PDHP)
Survey Rating: Dc2+
Planner: Caesar Quitevis, 510/238-6343 or clquitevis@oaklandnet.com

RCPC Land Use Committee

Updates: Hauser and Safeway Projects, Others

by Stuart Flashman, committee chair

■ Committee Notes

Richard Smith has resigned as chair of the Planning and Project Review Committee, and the RCPC board appointed Stuart Flashman to be his replacement. The board also voted to change the committee's name back to the Land Use Committee.

Based on applications received, the board appointed two new members to the committee: Jeff Small and Bill Garcia. Unless otherwise noted, meetings will now be held the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the upstairs meeting room of the Rockridge Branch Library. Meetings are generally open to the public. Contact Stu Flashman by phone at 652-5373 or via e-mail: stuflash@aol.com with questions.

■ Hauser/Creekside residential/ mixed-use project (Global Video Site – 5132 Telegraph)

City staff is still working on getting an environmental impact report prepared for this project. Reportedly, the project is being redesigned, although no new plans are available. We hope that when revised plans become available, the applicant will have another public meeting to discuss this significant and potentially very large (over 100 units) project.

■ College Avenue Safeway rebuild (6310 College Avenue at Claremont)

Safeway gave a preliminary presentation of their revised plans to the RCPC board. The revisions reduce the overall size somewhat, but the store is still proposed to be larger than 50,000 sq.ft. The store would have two street-level entrances off College Avenue, and the auto entrance to roof-top parking would be off Claremont. The truck loading area would be recessed under the side of the store nearest Alcatraz. Plans call for trucks to exit onto College just south of Alcatraz, but this may create traffic problems. Safeway's plans are still in flux. There will be another public meeting when the plans have been refined.

Land Use Committee Meeting: Wednesday, March 26, 7 p.m., Rockridge Branch Library

■ 5175 Broadway residential/ mixed-use project

RCPC voted not to oppose the project, subject to conditions to mitigate its impacts on the neighborhood. However, the Planning Commission rejected the project, based on design considerations, and sent it back for formal design review.

■ 5666 Telegraph residential project

This five-story project, just north of Highway 24, while not formally within the RCPC boundaries, could set an unfortunate precedent for this part of Telegraph Avenue, including areas that are within RCPC's boundary. It was approved administratively, but neighbors appealed the approval to the Planning Commission. RCPC expressed concern to the commission about the project's scale and its neighborhood impacts. The commission approved the project, but directed the applicant to work with the appellants to address the concerns raised.

■ Trader Joe's/Pharmica signage

by Jeff Small, RCPC boardmember, and Stuart Flashman

Pharmica, a new subtenant of Trader Joe's, wants a 100 sq. ft. sign, while the zoning only allows it 20 sq. ft. The current free-standing Trader Joe's sign eats up most of the allowed signage allotment. Trader Joe's also wants an additional large sign on the wall facing the BART parking lot. RCPC is opposing this, and has notified the Planning Department. It appears the department intends to deny Pharmica's and Trader Joe's requests, unless Trader Joe's first agrees to modify its stand-alone sign. Signage normally is handled administratively, without a public hearing. To express your opinion on this issue, contact the Planning Department at 238-3911.

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Schools: Claremont and Commerce

Claremont Community Day Brings Merchants and Students Together

by Jennifer Edmister, RCPC boardmember

The rain on Friday morning, February 22, couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of the more than 100 eighth graders from Claremont Middle School who poured onto College Avenue in small groups, ready to visit local merchants who had opened their businesses to the students. Escorted by parents and community volunteers, including two good-spirited Oakland police officers, most of the kids were happy enough to be excused from their morning classes. Many, however, took to the experience (and to the College Avenue trivia quiz that stumped most of the adult participants) with unexpected enthusiasm.

"How much money can you make at this job?" Several budding entrepreneurs, and others weighing their options, approached the College Avenue merchants with candor and courtesy that was returned in kind. Touching lightly on the concepts of overhead, inventory, and of course, profit, many small business owners explained that their shops were their livelihood, not just their hobbies. Alison, co-owner of dramatic play space Glitter and Razz, discussed internship opportunities and helped a few students to complete applications. At A Côté, groups were treated to a tour of the kitchen where sous chef Michael Cook explained his role and that of the kitchen staff, already hard at work more than six hours before the restaurant would open for dinner. Janet, a local psychotherapist, drew hoots of enthusiasm when she gave students a Soprano-like moment, inviting them to sit on the couch and make themselves comfortable. Less-small businesses, like newcomer Trader Joe's, added to the mix. Inside the walk-in freezer – big enough to accommodate a group of 10 students – the assistant manager discussed how perishables are supplied to the store and then, outside the freezer, offered warm brownies to the chilled group.



Ron Kriss of Lawton Associates with his student group at Stauder Automotive.

Photos: Susan Montauk

Hosted by the Rockridge District Association, the Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council and the Rockridge Community Planning Council, the first Claremont Middle School Rockridge Community Day was an event to make the community proud. As students opened a positive, respectful discourse with the business people of College Avenue, the benefit flowed in both directions – sometimes in unexpected ways. "I never knew why insurance was so important," one student remarked. "I should ask my parents if they have it."



Susan Bernosky of Allstate Insurance and Marcie Hodge of Claremont (at left) with their student group.

Hearty thanks to Sarah Lamb, Rockridge District Association Program Director and organizer of this event, to the Rockridge merchants who generously participated and to principal David Chambliss, the staff, parents and especially to the students of Claremont Middle School, all of whom conducted themselves graciously and enthusiastically. Asked for suggestions to improve the event, one eighth-grader wondered, "Next time, can we do it not just in Rockridge, but in other cities, too?"



Time out for a snack at Zachary's Pizza.

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Claremont Middle School to Hold Musical Play-a-Thon in Rockridge



Music Director Renae Briggs

Schools: Claremont and Music

by Ron Kriss, Rockridge parent

Exciting things are happening at Claremont Middle School (CMS) in Rockridge. In the last two years, a daily band and orchestra program added to the curriculum has grown wildly. Starting with just eight students, the program grew to 45 students last year and now has exploded to over 120 students.

Under the direction of Music Director Renae Briggs, the CMS Band & Orchestra has represented the school and the Rockridge community at district and regional music festivals, including the 2007 Rockridge Out & About Festival, the BART 50th Anniversary Celebration and the 2007 National Anthem Project in Sacramento.

This year the students are excited about attending a statewide band festival in Sacramento and the School Music Day at Great America. Each student must raise $75 to cover travel expenses and entry fees for this year's trips. To help meet those costs, the students are planning their only fundraiser: The 2008 Music Play-a-Thon. The students have learned 100 songs that they will perform in three College Avenue venues from 1 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 19: in front of Claremont Middle School on College at Miles (5750 College); at the Rockridge BART Station; and in front of Trader Joe's. The Band & Orchestra will play music from many different eras including Classical, Jazz, Marches, Movie Themes, Rock 'n Roll, Pop, and the Blues.

Please sponsor a student! All donations are tax deductible. Contact Renae Briggs (renaeb@california.com), drop by the school and visit the music program, or just show up on March 19 with your checkbook. Ms. Briggs also invites Rockridge neighbors who play an instrument to sit in and play along with the CMS students during the Play-A-Thon. Claremont parents, teachers and students hope that Rockridge will rally and support these aspiring young musicians.



Claremont Middle School Band & Orchestra perform on College Avenue during the 2007 "Out and About in Rockridge" street fair.

Much of the program's success is due to Renae Briggs. With an infectious spirit that has captured the support of students, parents, and Rockridge neighbors, she has become a driving force at the school. As Principal David Chambliss remarked, "It's now cool to be smart and to be in the band and orchestra at Claremont." This thrills the many Rockridge families who have dreamed of Claremont becoming a spirited neighborhood school providing a quality education for all students, including those who live nearby and those who travel from other Oakland areas.

"Much of the program's success is due to Renae Briggs."

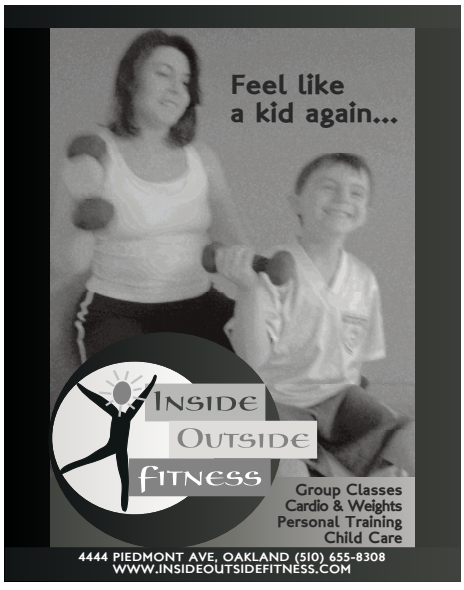
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RCPC 2007 Financial Statement

Fiscal Year ended December 31, 2007

RCPC publishes its annual financial statement in The Rockridge News after the end of each fiscal year.

RCPC General Fund	P&L DATA (cash basis)
Income	
Rockridge News	$41,790
Kitchen Tour	20,319
Interest Income	1,300
Other Income	901
Total Income	**64,310**
Expenses	
Rockridge News	36,352
Other Program Expenses	918
Kitchen Tour	5,684
Legal & Accounting	4,689
Insurance, Permits and Sales Tax	2,017
Misc. Administrative Expenses	4,475
Total Expenses	**54,135**
Net Receipts	**10,175**
Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL)	
Income	
Donations	7,097
Merchandising (book sales)	3,328
Interest Income	1,290
Total Income	11,715
Expenses	
Gifts to the Library	7,978
Library Scholarship	2,700
Misc. Administrative Expenses	973
Total Expenses	**11,651**
Net Receipts	**64**
Friends of the Rockridge Greenbelt (FROG)	
Income	
Donations	10,507
Merchandising (tee-shirts)	-
Interest Income	820
Total Income	**11,327**
Expenses	
Playground New Construction	1,406
Playground Maintenance & Bathroom	2,141
Misc. Administrative Expenses	404
Total Expenses	**3,951**
Net Receipts	**7,375**
Whistlestop Committee	
Income	
Merchandising (whistles)	120
Expenses	
Merchandising (whistles)	122
Grants	200
Misc. Administrative Expenses	16
Total Expenses	**338**
Net Receipts	**(218)**
Locksley Gardens	No activity in 2007
	BALANCE SHEET DATA
Assets	
Cash Accounts	
RCPC	14,849
FORL	12,722
FROG[1]	62,803
Whistlestop	453
Locksley Gardens[2]	499
Other Assets	
FROG: Balance of de la Fuente Funds[3]	26,607
RCPC CDs	40,952
FORL CDs	32,253
Total Assets	**191,137**
Liabilities & Equity	
RCPC: Commitment to FBC[4]	3,000
FROG: Commitment to FBC[5]	5,000
Equity	183,137
Total Liabilities & Equity	**191,137**

Footnoted items detailed, top of next column

(1) A portion of these funds are restricted gifts towards specific items planned for FROG-Park development.

(2) Correcting entry made on 1/29/07 to adjust Locksley Gardens account balance to $499.06, after team review.

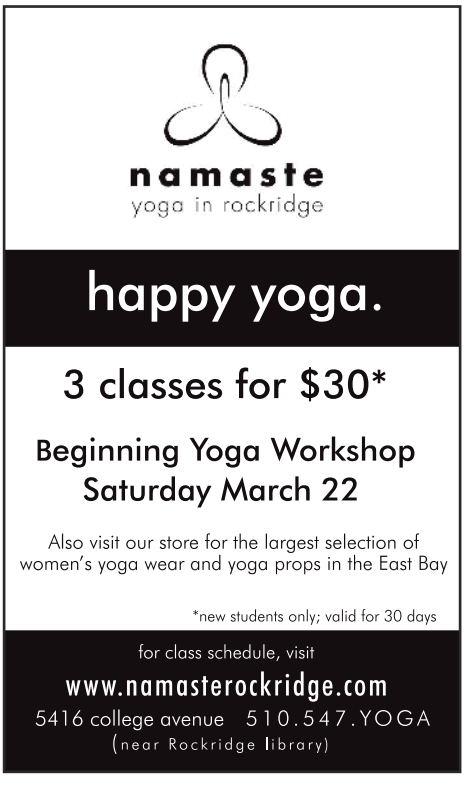
(3) Includes remaining balance of the $100k pledge in 2006 by Councilmember Ignacio de la Fuente for capital improvements of FROGPark.

(4) Represents a commitment by RCPC to fund an additional $3,000 of legal costs related to the 4th Bore Coalition (FBC)'s suit against CalTrans for a total RCPC commitment of $5,000.

(5) Represents commitment by FROG to fund $5,000 of legal cost for FBC's suit against CalTrans.

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

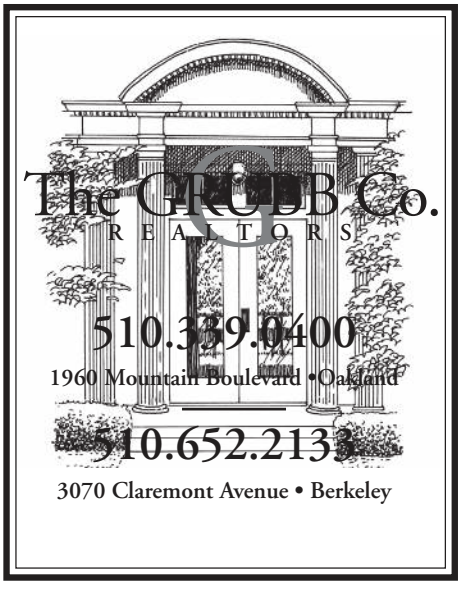












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RCPC's Redesigned Website Ready for Fine Tuning; Help Wanted

RCPC has been working since the fall to create a new, comprehensive, interactive website for the Rockridge community. We want it to be a community resource with the integrity and credibility of The Rockridge News.

We hope to better meet the RCPC mission with a community calendar, RCPC committee pages, community polls and forums/blogs, among other elements. As currently envisioned, the new RCPC website will function as an "umbrella" site within which Rockridge neighbors – homeowners, renters, students and merchants – can get together to enrich and improve our community. For example, boardmember Annette Floystrup is working to establish a "Green Rockridge Initiative." This would find a home in the new website as a web page where residents can find resources, share ideas and cooperate to lessen Rockridge's environmental "footprint." Another example: the Safeway on College is planning a new, much larger store on the site. What better place to gather, refine and focus community interest than a web page dedicated to this project?

We have a draft site underway, based on the open source content software Drupal that has all the necessary elements and functions; now we need help making it simple and attractive. Sounds like a job for an experienced web designer! Having identified website elements and their relationships, it should be a straightforward task to complete the site.

If you have advice, referrals, or are the person who wants to complete this website, contact Peter St. John at pcstjohn@earthlink.net.


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2008 February Sales; Chart, Median Prices for 2 Years

Close	BR/Bth	Address	Orig Price	DOM	Listing Price	Selling Price
2/12/08	2/2	5947 Keith Ave	$779,000	81	$769,500	$730,000
2/14/08	4/3	6000 Broadway	$1,125,000	14	$1,125,000	$1,087,500
2/25/08	2/1	5436 Proctor Ave	$749,000	14	$749,000	$780,000
2/26/08	4/3	6205 Mathieu	$1,275,000	11	$1,275,000	$1,337,500

Median Price of Houses Sold Over a 2 Year Period on a Monthly Basis
01/01/06 - 01/31/08





Oakland's Earth Day; April 19, '08

Each year hundreds of Oakland's neighborhood groups recruit thousands of volunteers to work on their own parks, median strips and open spaces. They are coordinated by and receive assistance from Oakland Public Works.

Rockridge projects have included the 51st Street public way, the Greenbelt from Clifton to Redondo Park and FROGPark.

Pictured below is a group of volunteers hard at work on 51st Street in a past Earth Day celebration.

The Rockridge News will report news of 2008 local events in the April issue.

Be sure to register your project now with the Public Works Department to receive assistance from the City (see box below).


PHOTO: SUSAN MONTAUK

Earthday Greening and Cleaning

Saturday morning, April 19, 2008 throughout Oakland.

Register your project for Earth Day and qualify for tools and other assistance: e-mail Sandra Steen at ssteen@oaklandnet.com or call 434-5113 by March 14.

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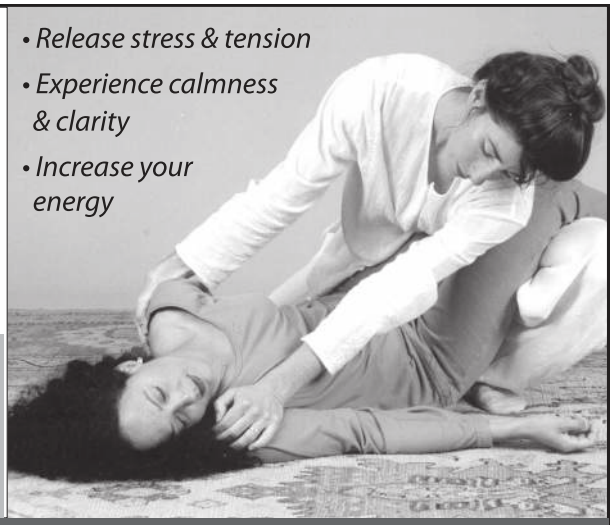
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Rockridge Real Estate Sales 2008 in Safe Mode

■ The State of our Real Estate in 2007-8

by Ortrun Niesar

The year 2007 presented a mixed bag of blessings for Rockridge home owners and buyers.

Inventory of about 118 units of single-family homes in our study area was fair, but availability was not equivalent in all price categories. Sales were sporadic throughout the year, best in the spring and fourth quarter, while the third quarter barely showed signs of life. Nevertheless, sales of properties that met the criteria for overall desirability – condition, appearance, location, schools and views – did better than expected. Listing prices for these properties actually increased conservatively, with sales coming in at about 3-5% over asking price, on average.

Comparative Sales Analysis

Be happy; the market is adjusting gently for us in Rockridge. Compare Rockridge sales price averages for detached single-family homes over the last three years; there has been little change. Average price per square foot in 2007 was $588, $538 and $506 for 2, 3 and 4+ bedrooms respectively. A higher median price was due to the availability of a greater number of 4+ bedroom homes, fetching prices of $1 million or more. Overall, demand for our homes remained high, even pushing sales prices a few percentage points over asking prices.

Outlook for 2008

So far, our bubble has not burst, but Rockridge is not immune from economy and mortgage crisis worries. There may not be many sub-prime loans in the neighborhood, but people who bought within the last two to four years may face refinancing or a step-up in interest payments without a concomitant rise in home values this year. The good news is that Rockridge home values have not dropped dramatically, nor will they. But times are indeed uncertain. The best advice would be to stay put for a year or two and just enjoy our fabulous neighborhood. If you must sell, you will find that a good home in Rockridge will still sell well if it is priced right. Give yourself plenty of time, though. Average time on the market is currently about 25 days, twice as long as in the past, and it may become even longer as sources of money tighten up. Also, if you anticipate financial difficulties, start now to figure out what to do. Time is of the essence, and so is finding a good financial consultant and real estate professional to help you sort out what you need to do to stay out of foreclosure.

This analysis covers Rockridge homes sales from the Berkeley border in the north, south to Broadway Terrace and 51st Street, west to Colby and east to Highway 13. Information supplied by East Bay Regional Data (EBRD) is deemed to be reliable but not guaranteed. Ortrun Niesar is a Realtor with Prudential California; ortrun.niesar@prurealty.com

Comparing Rockridge Home Sale Prices 2002-2007

Year	Avg. Price	% Chge	Median Price	%Chge
2002	$ 770,604		$ 691,500	
2003	847,637	9.9	750,000	8.5
2004	902,000	6.4	805,000	7.3
2005	1,032,139	14.4	930,500	15.6
2006	1,111,317	7.6	903,500	-3.0
2007	1,097,050	(1.3)	1,017,500	12.6

Average Sold Price by No. of Bedrooms

Year	2BR	3BR	4+BR	Homes Sold
2005	$802,513	$956,722	$1,466,920	124
2006	760,782	962,488	1,498,687	112
2007	794,272	971,663	1,377,322	118



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Make It A: habit



Photo: Don Kinkead

The Neighborhood Merchant

by Theresa Nelson

habit, a premium denim outlet, is one of the few places on College Avenue where you can buy designer goods at outlet prices. Behind the clean, crisp lines of the store lie some incredible bargains, 30-70% off retail prices for the same items found at major department stores and boutiques.

When Michelle Kim opened habit, she had already been selling clothing online for two years (through the former www.hipstersoutlet.com), while working as a music teacher in local schools. She'd always wanted her own store, and since she already enjoyed coming to College Avenue to shop, she grabbed an opportunity and opened in May 2006.

habit's concept is simple: offer designer jeans and casual clothes at outlet prices. Michelle is able to go directly to vendors to get overstocks and special lines and to then offer discounts of 50% or more. I can't mention the names of the lines she carries, but when you visit habit, you will see some of the most popular brands available.

Michelle notes that trends in jeans are shifting: higher rise, wider legs, and darker colors are in style. Ripped jeans are no longer popular, and boot-cut jeans seem to be phasing out. The jeans at habit are all of the newer styles, and complement the changes in other clothing elements. She noted that "Because jeans are something that almost everyone is comfortable with, they appeal to women from ages 15 to 65 and more." habit carries jeans in sizes 23 (like size 0) to 32 (like size 12); tops are available in sizes from XS to XL.

The denim skirts offered range from the micro-mini to knee-length, and from simple to quite adorned.

T-shirts are getting longer, almost tunic-like, and the trend seems to be that Ts are less of a layer and more something you wear on its own. Necklines are more feminine, some are quite dressy with lace trims, and the prints and textures are more sophisticated. habit offers a rainbow of T-shirts, every color arrayed along one wall in a cascade of choices: basic plain cottons, graphics, and a variety of sleeve styles. This year, many Ts feature interesting blends such as cashmere and cotton, silk and cotton, and sufina cotton.

Other choices include a variety of shorter pants – capris and gaucho pants, in a variety of colors and denim. Michelle also carries some corduroys in winter, as well as a few velvet styles, and khaki-style pants without pockets.

habit also offers some lovely bags from Argentina, with fine leather, not too decorated or adorned – they fit the simple, clean lines of the clothes. Also available are shoes from well-known designers, and a nice range of cute flip-flops in colors and patterns.

Michelle summed up her approach: "If you love designer clothes, you don't have to pay full price, just come to habit and we will find the right fit for you." Though the store offers dozens of styles of jeans, she is able to help customers find the two or three pairs that will fit, rather than a shopper having to try on endless pairs of jeans. This kind of personal service makes shopping for jeans – and other clothes – a pleasure.

Michelle enjoys being in Rockridge. "The customers here are wonderful– friendly, fashionable and nice to work with." She noted that "People come to Rockridge for the wonderful ambiance, folks who prefer strolling and seeing unique items (rather than going to a mall) and who enjoy some good coffee and great food along the way."

So take a stroll down College Avenue to habit, and you just may find the perfect pair of jeans you've been looking for, at a discount!

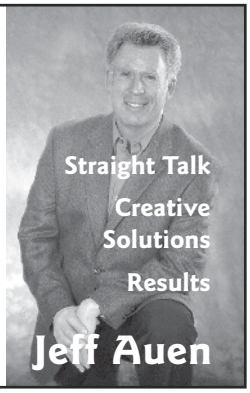
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Changes ON COLLEGE

by Theresa Nelson

March 2008

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International Women's Day

by Anna Marks

International Women's Day (IWD), March 8, was born at the turn of the last century — a time of economic and political turbulence. Celebrated around the world, IWD is rooted in the global movement for women's rights, including the right to vote, the right to equal pay and job opportunities, the right to hold office, and the right to live and work in a safe environment.

In 1975, the first of four International Women's Conferences was held in Mexico City — this same year was officially identified as the International Year of Women (at the recommendation of the UN Commission on the Status of Women), and IWD was given official recognition by the United Nations. It was also the year that CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, was drafted.

Often described as the "International Bill of Rights for Women," CEDAW was formally adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and has been ratified by 185 countries. It awaits ratification by the U.S. (the only developed nation that has not yet done so).

To continue the progress women have made toward true equality, there have been three more International Women's Conferences – Copenhagen in 1980; Nairobi in 1985; and Beijing in 1995.

The Beijing Conference saw the unanimous adoption of the Platform for Action (first drafted in Mexico City and formulated from agreements reached at the three previous conferences) by 189 countries, which continues to represent the framework of gender equality globally. There is a strong movement to see a fifth world conference in 2012 that would be the largest and most effective gathering of women to date (see www.5wwc.org).

Gender-based violence continues to be the most common but least punished crime in the world, both domestic and war-time, with no end in sight. As women around the globe continue to draw the links between peace and gender equity, they also continue to struggle for safe and free contraceptives, for access to adequate child care and health care, for equal political participation, for legal and safe abortions, for equal access to education, and to live free from fear.

As Eleanor Roosevelt, who, as chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights was instrumental in the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (signed December 10, 1948), stated so succinctly: "The destiny of human rights is in the hands of all our citizens in all our communities." For the women of the world, this is a time to review how far they have come in their struggle for justice, peace and equality. It is also an opportunity to unite, network and mobilize for meaningful change.

Anna Marks is a Rockridge resident, and serves on the Executive Committee of the Alameda County Commission on the Status of Women.

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E-mail *Rockridge News* Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210 (after noon), or mail to: *Rockridge News* Community Calendar, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the month.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Compiled by Jo Ellis

Councilmember Brunner's Community Advisory Meeting

Saturday April 12, 10am to noon (no March meeting). Peralta Elementary School: 460 63rd St. (parking on Alcatraz Ave., just east of Telegraph). **Meeting topic: What Makes a Great Urban Public School?** Featured speakers: OUSD State Administrator **Vincent Matthews** and Emery Unified School District Superintendent **Stephen Wesley.** For info on all District One issues, call 238-7001, or view Brunner Report at www.oaklandnet.com (the site for all City-related information).

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas are invited to voice their concerns about crime and public safety. **Note new time and place:** Meets 4th Thursday each month, 7pm, at Rockridge Library, upstairs meeting room. Rockridge Library, 5366 College Ave. info@rockridgencpc.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN:

- **Toddler Story Time: Note new days: now every Saturday**, 10:30am.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am: 3/19, 4/2.
- **Pajama Story Time**: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7pm: 3/11, 3/25, 4/8 (see Special Event).

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES:

- **Stories to Play With**: Tales told with puppets, paper, toys and imagination. **Hiroko Fugita**, Master Japanese storyteller, with **Fran Stallings** giving brief English synopses of the tales. Tuesday, 4/8 at 7pm.

FOR TEENS:

- **Anime Club: Teens 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation) with other teens. 2nd Tuesday of each month (3/11), from 5 to 6:30pm, upstairs meeting room.
- **5th Annual Making Manga Magic Contest:** On an 8-1/2"x11" sheet, draw (black & white or color), paint, or use computer graphics to create your own manga or anime character. Entrants must be 12-18 years old and have an Oakland Public Library card. Deadline for submission is March 30. Contact the library for information on how to submit your entry. Winners will be announced on the library website (www.oaklandlibrary.org) and a reception held April 12.
- **Teen Tech Week Celebrations:** Get details from Teen Specialist Librarian Susy Moorhead, 597-5017.

FOR ADULTS:

- **Writers' Support /Critique Group**: ALL writers welcome. Third Saturday of each month (3/15) 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.
- **Oakland Bird Club** Free open meeting (non-members welcome). **Bill Bousman** will talk about his book, *Breeding Bird Atlas of Santa Clara County, California.* Wed., 3/19, 7:30pm. More info: 444-0355.
- **Women's History Month Program***:* free screening of ***Iron-Jawed Angels,*** starring **Hillary** Swank as Alice Paul, dramatizing the struggle of women to get the right to vote. Presented by Oakland Eastbay NOW. Saturday 3/8, 2pm.
- **Clear Your Clutter:** Experienced organizer **Joan Craig** will share proven methods to reduce clutter and get organized. Saturday, 4/5, 1 to 3:30pm.
- **Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice.** First Tuesday of each month from 6 to 8pm. Advance sign-up starts 5pm. More information: 597-5017.

ART EXHIBITS

Gallery: March: Artwork by **Jean Diller** and **Oakland Public Library Staff Members.**

Lobby Display Case: March**:** Artwork by **Jean Diller** and **Oakland Public Library Staff Members.**

Call 597-5017 for April exhibits.

LIBRARY HOURS:
Mon. and Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.
Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 10am to 5:30pm.
Fri., 12 to 5:30pm. Closed Sundays.

Amnesty International Meeting

Exchange information and ideas on action. All welcome. Monday, 3/10, 7:30pm. Diesel Bookstore, 5433 College Ave., 653-9965.

Peace Corps Information Session

It's never too late to serve! Volunteers work in 74 countries in education, health, business, environment and more. No upper age limit to join. Learn more Monday, 3/17, 6 to 7:30pm, Rockridge Library, 5366 College Ave. More info: Nick Bosustow, 452-8444, nbosustow@peacecorps.gov, or www.peacecorps.gov.

LiveTalk@CPS

College Preparatory School (CPS) Lecture Series: open to all. **Fish Forever: Creating Sustainable Fisheries. Paul Johnson,** founder of famed Monterey Fish Market, talks about the degradation and destruction of fish habitats, discusses fishing practices and habitat sustainability and shares insights and anecdotes. Thursday, 3/13, 7:30 to 9pm. Doors open at 7pm for complimentary refreshments. $12.50 in advance or $15 (students $5) at the door, cash only. Proceeds support the CPS endowment fund and financial aid program. Buttner Auditorium, 6100 B'way (at Brookside). Wheelchair accessible; free parking. More info: 420-2351 or www.college-prep.org/livetalk.

Claremont Middle School Music Play-A-Thon

Fundraiser for the Claremont Band and Orchestra. Band members must raise funds to attend 2 music festivals. Neighbors, commuters, and shoppers will be serenaded with 4 hours of music at 3 different venues in Rockridge: In front of Claremont Middle School (on College at Miles), the Rockridge BART Station and Trader Joe's on College Ave. If you play an instrument, you're invited to sit in and jam with the 6, 7 and 8th graders in the orchestra. Bring your instrument and your check book. All donations are tax deductible. Wednesday, 3/19 from 1 to 5pm. For more info contact Renae Briggs at renaeb@california.com. **See article on page 7.**

Park Day School Benefit

Jon Carroll, local columnist for the S.F. Chronicle, spends an evening in conversation with fellow columnist **Leah Garchik.** Monday, 3/24, 7pm. Wine and soft drinks available. Come early to get a good seat and mingle. Tickets: $25 (students $18) can be purchased on-line at www.parkdayschool.org. Proceeds benefit the school's academic and financial assistance programs. Berkeley Rep's Thrust Theater, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley. Info: 653-0317x103 or cathy@parkdayschool.org.

Jazz at the Chimes

Concert and Artist Reception featuring **The Wayne Wallace Latin Jazz Quintet.** Sunday, 3/16, 2pm. Ticket sales at the door begin at 12:30pm: $10-15 (cash only) for concert, reception and refreshments. Kids under 12 free. Sponsored by the Lifemark Group Arts program that features Bay Area talent. Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. Wheelchair accessible. Info/Reservations: 228-3218. www.lifemarkgroup.com/oakland/special_events.asp.

Wisteria Ways Concert Series

Keith Terry and Tobias Roberson: Unique body percussion duo. Thursday, 3/27, 8pm (house opens at 7:30pm). Inside venue; not wheelchair accessible. More info at www.crosspulse.com and www.riqq.com.

Eliyahu and Qadim: Modern interpretations of ancient mystical music of the Middle East. Sunday, 4/6, 3pm. 383 61st Street. Simple refreshments provided and you can also bring something to share. $15-20 suggested donation for musicians (cash please at the door). For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

The Pacific Boychoir Academy

The Grammy Award winning Boychoir and members of the Laudate Orchestra will perform the Pergolesi Stabat Mater, presented within the context of The Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, as part of the St Augustine's Church Centennial Celebrations. Friday, 3/21, 1pm (doors open at noon). St. Augustine Church, 400 Alcatraz Ave. For more info, contact Music Director Jim Gilman at 220-8453.

California College of the Arts (CCA) Events

Launch: The First Year Exhibition: A curated show of works by first-year CCA undergraduates. March 3-14. Preview day: Sat., 3/8, 10am – 1pm. Gallery hours: Mon.-Fri., 8am to 4:40pm. CCA Oliver Art Center, 5212 B'way. Info: 594-3642 or www.cca.edu/calendar.

Spring Fair: Arts and crafts fair with unique, affordable gifts made by CCA students, alumni and staff. Ceramics, glass, jewelry, clothing and textiles, photos and paintings. Live jazz music. Saturday, 4/12, 11am to 3pm. CCA Oakland Campus (B'way and College), main walkway. Info at 594-3678.

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