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The Rockridge News

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Council Committee Revises Proposed Permit Parking Fees



Details, page 4

RCPC Town Hall Meeting
AGENDA
October 2008

Thursday, October 16, 7:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College Avenue at Manila,
Community Room (Upstairs)

■ RCPC Program Offers a Look at November Ballot Items

☑ The Rockridge Community Planning Council is sponsoring a discussion at the October Town Hall meeting of the 12 state propositions and a number of local measures slated for the November ballot. The meeting is on October 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the Rockridge Branch Library. Q & A will follow the presentations. Nikki Harris of the League of Women Voters (LWV) will lead and moderate the discussion.

Join your friends and neighbors at the meeting and learn more about current political issues in a nonpartisan presentation that will help you make informed decisions on November 4.

REPORTS: September RCPC Town Hall Meeting

BART Sets Start Date for Massive Station Retrofit

by Chuff Afflerbach

"It is heavy-duty construction; we don't want to sugarcoat that." That was how BART spokeswoman Catherine Westphall described the earthquake retrofit work scheduled to begin at the Rockridge station at the end of 2008. At the RCPC Town Hall meeting held at the Rockridge Library on September 18, Westphall and BART colleague Molly McArthur outlined the construction plans and answered questions from residents concerned about the project's impact on the neighborhood.

BART's key priority, according to Westphall, is to keep the station open and the trains running throughout the year-long project. The work will, therefore, be done in two phases: the first will include the station itself and the east parking lot; the second phase will involve the larger west lot.

In the station, stairways and escalators will be reinforced, along with the canopy over the train platform. In the parking lot, each and every support column

Reports: BART, page 10



Come year's end, BART will begin earthquake retrofit work on the Rockridge station and on columns supporting elevated trackways. Valet parking will be available to minimize disruption of commuter parking. PHOTO: DON KINKEAD

Reestablishing Native Plants to Repair Ecosystems

by Ellen Peterson, RCPC boardmember

Immediately following BART's seismic retrofit presentation at the RCPC Town Hall meeting was a presentation stressing the importance of planting native plants and removing non-native invasives in order to repair the ecosystems on which our native wild animals and birds depend.

Speaker, Lech Naumovich, Founding Director of Golden Hour Restoration Institute, showed a series of slides of an ecological restoration project he currently heads at the Caldecott North Oakland Sports Field (at the intersection of Highway 24 and Old Tunnel Road). This large area, consisting of playing fields, creek, and wildland, contains trails linking up with regional parkland and contains sections of the wildlife corridor connecting Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Golden Hour Restoration Institute is in the process of repairing land along the creek damaged during construction of the playing fields, using volunteer help. Contact www.goldenhour.org to volunteer.

Then, biologist Laura Baker, Conservation Committee Chair of the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, discussed the extensive wildlife living in the Rockridge area and the importance of planting natives and suppressing non-native invasive

Reports: Plants, page 10

In My Opinion

Measure OO Not Good for Oakland

by Susan Montauk, Oakland Parks & Recreation commissioner

With the November election so close, Oakland citizens need to get the facts about Measure OO, which will be on their ballots. Its informal name, Kids First 2, will surely appeal to the better side of everyone—what could be wrong with a measure that puts kids first? Plenty!

Measure OO is a proposal to more than double the amount of money that Oakland must budget for non-public programming for kids. The original Kids First, Measure K, was passed in 1996 and, for the past 12 years, Oakland has paid over $72 million to fund Kids First programs. Last year alone it paid $13 million! Kids First was set to expire this year but the City Council rescued it and renewed it for another 12 years. Now, proponents of Kids First 2 want much more money. Within three years of the passage of Measure OO, Oakland would have to budget about $26 million annually to Kids First.

Excellent city programs provided to children, youth, adults and seniors would have to be cut if Measure OO passes. For a sampling of those programs visit http://oaklandnet.com/parks and click on the "recreation centers" selection in the page heading. Choose any one of the centers and see the program highlights to have an idea of the exciting array of classes for kids, adults and seniors that our city provides. Were Measure OO to pass, programming at recreation centers, senior centers and libraries would be so severely cut that Oaklanders would have to travel long distances to find the classes that they now enjoy at their local facilities, precluding the participation of those most in need.

The original Kids First was a set-aside of 2.5 percent of the city's General Fund (about $475 million) for programming for youth. The proposal on your ballots is for 2.5 per cent of the total city budget (about $1.3 billion). This would boost Kids First funding to about $26 million by its third year, an amount that would dwarf all other city programs other than police and fire. In a time of financial crisis in the city of Oakland, it would be unconscionable to double any program's budget.

Adding to the outrageous aspects of Measure OO is the measure's absence of a sunset clause. That means that if it passes, it would go on forever. Only another ballot initiative could end this exorbitant add-on and save the city's budget.

Voter approval of OO would wreak havoc on Oakland's budget, which, due to an overestimation of this year's revenues, is already facing emergency cuts of about $50 million. Vote No on OO and save the valuable services, activities, and programs open to **all** Oakland citizens and visitors.

Susan Montauk is a former RCPC board member. The views expressed in this column are her own and do not necessarily reflect the views of RCPC or its current board.

<title>RCPC Nav bar</title>

If the line of text above talks to you, RCPC can use your help. We are looking for help and some tech support with maintaining our website, http://rockridge.org. If you are interested, let us know: E-mail chair@rockridge.org, and we'll talk.

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Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.
Sunday: **CLOSED**
Library program details: See Calendar, page 15.

The Rockridge News

The Rockridge News, founded in 1986 by Don Kinkead, is published monthly in Oakland and is sponsored by the Rockridge Community Planning Council (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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To subscribe to ***The Rockridge News***, send your check for $20, payable to *Rockridge News* Subscriptions, to: *Rockridge News* Subscriptions at the address below.

Contacting *The Rockridge News*

- Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in ***The Rockridge News***?
- Do you have questions about newsletter distribution?
- 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
www.rockridge.org
The Rockridge News, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618
RCPC Voicemail: 510/869-4200

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
☛ **November 8, 2008**
☛ **November deadline is October 23.**
Advertising rates are $26/column inch. Six-month pre-pay rate available. For display ads, call Jo Ellis at 653-3210 (after noon), or e-mail joellis1@hotmail.com. *RCPC reserves the right to refuse any display or classified ad that it deems inappropriate. (Classified ad contact, page 14.)*

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.

5386 Bryant Avenue

Proposal: To construct a 374 square-foot addition on the 2nd floor of a 1,529 square-foot single-family dwelling; the addition would maintain a four-foot set-back to match the existing 1st floor.

Contact Person/ Cecil Lee

Phone Number: 510/527-9272

Owners: Leo O'Brien & Vandy Howell

Planning Permits Required: Regular Design Review for a residential addition requiring a Variance; Minor Variance for a 4-foot side yard setback where 5-feet is required.

Case Planner: Ulla-Brit Jonsson, 510/238-3322, e-mail ujonsson@oaklandnet.com

400 Alcatraz Ave

Proposal: To establish a new telecommunications facility at an existing church (St. Augustine Catholic Church), including 12 panel antennas within an existing bell tower, a 175 square-foot equipment cabinet inside the bell tower, and 4 concealed antennas mounted to the west exterior wall.

Applicant: Shannon McDougall, Cortel LLC, for AT&T

Owner: Roman Catholic Diocese of Oakland

Planning Permits Required: Major Conditional Use Permit and Design Review for a Macro Telecommunications Facility

Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Property; Survey

Rating C2+ (Secondary importance, contributor to an Area of Secondary Importance)

Case Planner: Holly Pearson, 510/238-3079

Rockridge Artists Wanted

Local artists planning to participate in "Open Studios" in December, and who want to join a group to publicize the event, please contact Liz Maxwell (by October 13) at 654-5741 or lizmaxwell@prodigy.net.

RCPC Land Use Committee

Land Use Committee Meeting:
Wednesday, October 22, 7 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman,
RCPC Land Use Committee chair

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

There have now been two Safeway-sponsored "stakeholder representative" meetings: the first on September 10 and the second on September 22. The stakeholders consist of RCPC, Claremont-Elmwood Neighborhood Association (CENA), Rockridge District Association (RDA), Concerned Neighbors, the store's Alcatraz Avenue (Berkeley) neighbors, and a representative of the merchants on College Avenue across from Safeway. Safeway also invited two "independents": Ito Ripsteen, owner of the building at 3170 College Avenue (northwest corner at Alcatraz Avenue); and Rockridge resident Fred Hertz, a land use attorney who shares office space with Safeway's attorney, Rena Rickles. At the first meeting, Concerned Neighbors, RCPC, and CENA all objected to the participation of the named persons as "independents." Discussion at the second meeting left the issue unresolved, but the groups were emphatic that the Safeway appointees not be allowed to block the rest of the groups from reaching agreements.

Each stakeholder group has presented its position. All of the groups felt the proposed size of the replacement structure was a paramount issue. Other big issues included traffic, design, protecting the C-31 zoning and the vitality of the College Avenue retail district, and minimizing impacts on neighbors and the community. One other issue was whether Safeway was taking anything off the table as non-negotiable.

At the second meeting, Safeway presented what it calls "essential elements." These include use of the Safeway logo and other characteristics that identify the store as a Safeway "lifestyle" store including the peripheral departments (deli, bakery, florist, etc.) that are part of their larger stores. Safeway representative Todd Paradis said he was willing to present other options to Safeway's management if the group agreed on them, but said he was pessimistic that management would change its position.

The major meeting topic again was size, and no conclusions were reached, other than that Safeway's recent proposed building was too big and didn't fit the neighborhood. Safeway was asked to bring designs from some of their recently built, smaller stores to the next meeting.

Meeting minutes will be posted on Safeway's Web site, safewayoncollege.com, and will also be available at rockridge.org.

More meetings are set for October 13, and 22, and November 3, each starting at 7 p.m. at the Claremont Middle School gym. Check the rockridge.org Web site and the RCPC e-News for updates. All meetings are open to the public, with a public comment period at the meeting's end. (See page 11 for how to sign up for the e-News.)

Land Use Committee Meetings

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets the fourth Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m., at the Rockridge Branch Library. Contact Stu Flashman at 652-5373 or stuflash@aol.com for copies of the agenda.

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

Hauser Architects, the project applicant, is seeking support for its revised project design, which now includes 103 residential

Land Use Update, page 5

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Letters to the Editor



The Rockridge News welcomes letters to the editor. Your name, address, phone number, 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.

I like Safeway; I don't like their plans

Editor:

There was no Safeway on College Avenue when I first came here as a little girl in 1942. The store then on that site was called Hagstrom's. It was good then and it's good now. I like Safeway; I just don't like their future plans.

Some Safeways in outside areas sell gas at lower prices. Our Safeway should consider that idea. There are gas pumps right next door already. Our Safeway could sell gas and even build a new pharmacy and/or a shoe repair shop on that property. That would draw more customers to our Safeway.

I'm not against our Safeway making small changes but I'm very much against them expanding into the retail shops nearby. Their plans would hurt our small community. I'm sure their plans would cause them to lose more customers.

— Josie Lemon

Why isn't the e-News more timely?

While not a letter to the Editor of The Rockridge News, the following e-mail exchange between the producer of the e-News and a Rockridge reader demonstrates the importance of having a variety of information sources available to keep up with changes and activities in the neighborhood. Have you registered for your copy of the e-News? See page 11 for an explanation of the e-News program and details on how to sign up. — Editor, The Rockridge News

e-News Editor:

It is ridiculous to receive such short notice of the September 10 meeting of the Safeway stakeholders group. Do you think most people can arrange their lives around this by rescheduling everything else? I realize we now have dates for the next five meetings of the group, but this short notice to the public was unacceptable if the public's presence is, in fact, really welcomed.

— Thomas Koster

Dear Mr. Koster:

The Rockridge e-News is not meant to be your only source of news about Rockridge. RCPC has only recently begun using it as an additional way (beyond the monthly Rockridge News and the rockridge.org Web site) to help keep the Rockridge community informed about upcoming events. The meeting date was announced in the Rockridge News (under the Land Use Update column), but the details of where and when it would be were announced very near to the meeting date.

The e-News is put out by one volunteer (me) with help from others inside and outside RCPC who tell me what Rockridge-relevant events are coming up. I try to put out the e-News twice a month (roughly every two weeks), but that depends on when I find out about things. I had planned to put out an issue of the e-News this week, but had to scramble to even put out this late-breaking news in time for it to be relevant. I am sorry about the extremely short notice of the Safeway stakeholders meeting; given the short notice we ourselves got, I was happy we were able to get the information out at all.

RCPC tries its best to keep the Rockridge community informed about important events, but we're sometimes stretched thin. I can say that we try to do our best; I'm sorry that this time it wasn't as good as you (or I) would have liked.

— Joan Martin, e-News production manager

I get more than just exercise when I walk

Editor:

I am a block captain and deliver The Rockridge News to the Upper Rockridge area of Oakland. I saw the "In my Opinion" article in the September issue of The Rockridge News [presenting the writer's feeling that people should walk more] and thought I should mention that I have walked 509 miles this year and many walks were in the Rockridge area. As a follow-up, if someone is looking for a way to get out and walk, they should consider walking next year in the Susan G. Komen 3-Day Breast Cancer Walk. It takes place in San Francisco and participants walk 60 miles in three days.

Our team of four people — the Sole Sisters —raised over $10,000 for the Susan G. Komen breast cancer walk this year. Our two fundraisers took place at the Montclair Bistro and the Kona Club in Piedmont Avenue area with raffle prizes from the merchants in Rockridge as well as other merchants throughout Oakland.

It's always nice to hear stories of people giving back and I know there were other walkers who participated in our area. Forming a team is a great way to meet new people in the community.

— Elisa Uribe

Council Committee Revises Proposed Permit Parking Fees

by Jon Gabel and Don Kinkead

When news that the City was considering an increase in Residential Permit Parking (RPP) fees was announced at a meeting the City held in February 2008, many program participants were outraged to learn that the overall increase could almost triple the current fee amounts. Citing the need to cover costs of administering the program, the City Administrator's office proposed raising initial registration fees to $60 from $25, and annual renewal fees to $50 from $15.

Insult was added to injury for many participants when notice of the proposed changes was mailed haphazardly, if at all, to those who would be affected, blunting an effective response to the proposal. As further information became available, it was learned that the proposal had been presented to the Finance and Management Committee of the City Council in November 2007.

When the matter finally came to a hearing before that committee on September 23, members split on whether to move ahead with the increase as proposed or make adjustments. After discussion, District 1 Councilmember Jane Brunner moved that new resident permit application fees be increased to $35 and renewal fees raised to $20. Her motion was seconded by Councilmember Nancy Nadel and passed by the committee. The proposal will be considered by the full Council at its October 7 meeting. If approved, the increases would become effective immediately.

The committee also decided to request a performance evaluation of the program because committee members had heard community complaints of inefficiencies and antiquated procedures in the program's administration. The evaluation is expected to take about a year.

Land Use Update

from page 3

units plus ground floor retail on Telegraph and Claremont. Parking is to be accommodated through shared commercial and residential spaces, with valet commercial parking as a back-up solution. The design incorporates a 20-foot wide walkway between Creekside and the adjoining approved, but not yet built, Civiq project, with a faux creek running through it. While less bulky than the earlier design, the new project design still requires a major variance for height as well as variances for setbacks and shared parking. RCPC continues to have concerns, but seeks feedback from the community about the acceptability of this alternative. More detailed project plans may be found on the rockridge.org website. Comments may be directed to Land Use Committee Chair, RCPC, 5245 College Avenue PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618, or via e-mail to chair@rockridge.org.

Meanwhile, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the project was circulated for public review. RCPC submitted an eight-page comment letter on September 29. That letter, and other comment letters, will be available at rockridge.org.

■ BART Seismic Retrofit Project (BART station and aerial structures through Rockridge)

This project was presented and discussed at the RCPC September Town Hall meeting. (See retrofit report, page 1.) Detailed project information, including the full BART slide presentation, enforceable light and noise standards to protect Rockridge residents, construction schedules (as available) and procedures for registering complaints, will be posted at rockridge.org, RCPC's Web site.

■ Red Oak Realty (5915 College Avenue – Dreyers Building)

As noted in the September issue of The Rockridge News, Red Oak Realty proposes to move its Oakland office from the corner of Broadway and Pleasant Valley Road to the ground floor space currently occupied by Cotton & Co. in the Dreyer's building at the intersection of College Avenue and Chabot Road. The issue is controversial because of RCPC's long-standing opposition to allowing non-retail uses at street level on College Avenue. Both the Land Use Committee and the RCPC board took up this issue at their August and September meetings, but neither reached a conclusion. The issue is now being revisited, especially in light of comments, both pro and con, received from Rockridge residents. The Land Use Committee has now voted unanimously to oppose the proposal. The commentary following this article provides some background for that recommendation. Please consult the rockridge.org Web site for the latest update on board action.

In My Opinion

Why Does RCPC Oppose Establishing Ground-Floor Office Use on College Avenue?

by Don Kinkead

Decisions in Rockridge about what uses can be approved for which commercial spaces are governed by zoning regulations, as they are in other parts of Oakland. In Rockridge the regulations are set forth in the C-31 chapter of the zoning code, proposed by RCPC in the late 1970s in response to conditions which arose in the aftermath of Highway 24 and BART construction.

Highway 24 and BART Decimate Rockridge and College Avenue

Reeling from the removal of a swath of housing and its thousands of residents in

Ground Floor, page 7

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Grab Your Kids and Your Costume: Join the Halloween Parade!

Continuing our neighborhood's great, ghoulish tradition, the Rockridge District Association (RDA) and the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) invite you to celebrate a SPOOOKY Halloween on College Avenue. From noon to 2 p.m. on Sunday, October 26. Participating merchants will host trick-or-treating along both sides of College Avenue, from Alcatraz to Broadway.

To join the costumed procession, meet at Halloween Central in front of the College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Avenue, at 11:45 a.m.

At precisely noon, we'll kick off trick-or-treating, leading the first group along College Avenue. Then, at 1 p.m., return to Halloween Central for spooky storytelling and silly, scary sing-alongs. Storytellers from the Storytelling Association of Alta California will spin yarns in the courtyard in front of the Presbyterian Church.

Join in this holiday fun for kids of all ages!



Breaking Out of the Two-Car Rut with a Shared Ride

by Joan Martin, RCPC boardmember

We all know gas prices have gone up a LOT. I used to fill my Honda Accord for $18. Now the BMW costs about $67 per fill-up, and it's not because the car got nicer. So what to do when one car is not enough for a family, but owning a second car is priced out of the question? Joining a car share program may be the answer.

City CarShare is one of over 30 independent car share companies in North America and, along with Zipcar, has come to the rescue of Rockridge residents needing a temporary second vehicle. You may already have seen the company's cars sporting the City CarShare logo in the neighborhood.

Founded in 2001, City CarShare is a local non-profit with a large fleet, one third of which is fuel-efficient cars. Recognizing that some drivers want form over function, the company also offers Mini Coopers, trucks and Honda Elements. Two wheelchair-accessible vans are also available for use.

Within Oakland, Berkeley, El Cerrito and Albany, there are almost 200 PODs (Points of Departure) where the CarShare vehicles await use. Rockridge has two such locations; one inside the west side of the BART station parking lot and the other at the corner of Oak Grove and College avenues (across from Zachary's Chicago Pizza). Anita Daley, the company's director of membership development and outreach said, "We LOVE Rockridge!" City CarShare demonstrates a commitment to community by also placing its cars for use in neighborhoods that other companies might not choose.

CITYCARSHARE

This environmentally-focused, non-profit company shows its true colors when Daley remarks, "We encourage people to walk, take BART or ride their bike first. Remember: It's reduce, re-use, then recycle." In other words, take our – or any – car as a last resort.

Asked about the company's goals for growth, Daley said, "We are here to serve the community. Whatever they need is what we'll provide."

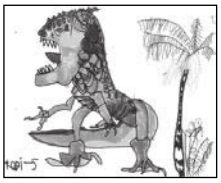
The company's overall goal is to remain sustainable, a good idea for a non-profit. Its financial status in the last few months has been "break-even, maybe a little to the positive," Daley remarked.

So, how easy is it to arrange CarShare transportation? Drivers can sign up for one of two plans at either $10 or $20 per month. The difference is in how many long trips can be taken and at what price. Each plan averages about $6.50 per hour for local trips. That includes gas, maintenance and insurance. (Insurance provides liability coverage up to $1 million, more than many other car sharing companies who often offer only the legal minimum of $15,000). Gas is purchased with a card that City CarShare provides; no more gas bills coming at the end of the month. Want to plan an out-of-town overnight? A drive to Carmel or to the Monterey Aquarium would cost $40 for the 24-hour period plus 10¢/mile. Since the round-trip is about 230 miles, that is $23 in mileage for a total trip cost of $63.

Are reservations difficult? Vehicles can be reserved up to three months in advance. The company asks that cars not be taken for more than three days at a time. Happy CarShare user Connie Yip exclaimed, "It's great! If you don't really want [to own] a car, it's there when you need one. And, it's more sustainable not to own a car." She is a happy customer.

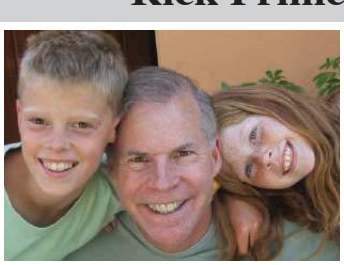
Could using a City CarShare vehicle on an as-needed basis save transportation costs? It could. The American Automobile Association (AAA) estimates that owning a car costs an average of $500 per month. Actual costs can be even higher. For example, for a $20,000 car with a 3-year loan at 2.9 per cent, the payment is $580 per month. Maintenance is about $200 per year or $17 per month. Auto insurance with a $1 million umbrella liability policy is about $600 per year or $50 per month, according to Bill K'Burg of Farmer's Insurance in Walnut Creek. Gas to drive 1,000 miles a month

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Ground Floor

from page 5

the area extending from 40th Street to the Caldecott Tunnel, and the loss of established College Avenue businesses when the then-new Highway 24 split the shopping area in two, some in the city felt that Rockridge and Temescal were ripe for high-density housing and franchise business development.

Many residents were concerned that College Avenue's local community-oriented businesses would be crowded out by chain and fast-food outlets with the potential to turn the avenue into little more than an automobile-oriented suburban-type strip mall. Also, the zoning in the residential areas around the newly built Rockridge BART station allowed high-density use buildings, which would have permitted the construction of large apartment buildings similar to those found around parts of Lake Merritt.

Rockridge residents formed a coalition — the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) — with adjoining neighborhood groups to respond to these threats to the area's low-rise, Craftsman-style housing and to encourage pedestrian-friendly retail businesses. The coalition conceived of, developed, and prevailed upon the City to adopt new zoning regulations that could better guide the area's redevelopment. These regulations were numbered "C-31" for commercial areas and "R-35" for residential areas.

According to C-31's general description in the Oakland Planning Code, "The C-31 zone is intended to create, preserve, and enhance areas with a wide range of retail establishments serving both short and long term needs in attractive settings oriented to pedestrian comparison shopping, and is typically appropriate along important shopping streets having a special or particularly pleasant character." Based on the stated intention, the regulations designate activity and use that is either permitted or restricted. For example, specifications and limitations for signs, marquees and awnings as to their size, placement, illumination and materials are structured to ensure design consistency.

As Rockridge has become more popular and drawn more traffic, it has also drawn the interest of a wider variety of businesses to locate on College Avenue. The types of businesses permitted to locate in the C-31 regulated area are another aspect of development controlled by zoning.

Ground-level uses in particular are ordinarily limited to certain types of businesses. C-31 restricts non-retail uses on the ground floor. As stated more specifically in the regulations, "no residential activity; limited child care, community assembly, community education, administrative, or health care civic activity; or medical service, consultative and financial service, group assembly, administrative, or business and communication service commercial activity shall be located on the ground floor of any building, except upon the granting of a conditional use permit [CUP]."

The restricted uses have to be approved by the Planning Commission and meet a series of stringent conditions, including "that the proposal will not weaken the concentration and continuity of retail facilities at the ground level, and will not impair the retention or creation of important shopping frontage." That is in addition to the more general requirement that "the proposed development will enhance the successful operation of the surrounding area in its basic community functions."

Many Rockridge residents familiar with the history and intent of C-31 zoning — and with planning issues in general — feel that allowing more service types of businesses that do not deal with retail goods, such as real estate and financial services (both restricted by C-31), to operate on College Avenue will drive rents higher, making it less likely that new retail businesses could open in Rockridge. The diverse and robust retail environment in Rockridge is what draws neighbors and customers to the area. A loss of that diversity would threaten College Avenue's existence as a vibrant shopping area and successful source of sales tax revenue for the City.

One of the major goals of RCPC, therefore, should be to continue to preserve the integrity of the C-31 and R-35 zones. This requires that the organization take a firm stand against uses that could undermine College Avenue's commercial success and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere and the livable character of the neighborhood.

The author thanks Rockridge neighbor and former RCPC chair Theresa Nelson for material used in the preparation of this article.

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Rockridge Sales Starting to Soar this September!

Closing	Br	Bth	Address	Orig Price	DOM	LP	SP
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9/4/2008	4	1	362 Cavour St	$749,000	91	$699,000	$685,000
9/16/2008	2	1.5	39 Harbord Ct	$749,000	44	$719,000	$725,000
9/11/2008	3	2	5218 Shafter Ave	$879,000	13	$879,000	$912,000
9/18/2008	3	1.5	6762 Manor Crest	$945,000	16	$945,000	$975,000
9/17/2008	3	2.5	5329 Broadway	$1,095,000	15	$1,095,000	$1,095,000
9/9/2008	3	2.5	6468 Benvenue Ave	$1,295,000	14	$1,295,000	$1,510,000

- September of 2008 had just over two times as many closings as September of 2007.
- In September of 2007 the average List to Sell price was 109%. In & 2008 it was 104%.
- Average days on market 29, in comparison to a mere 13 days a year ago.
- 71% of properties Listed in Rockridge, Sold for OVER asking price, 66% last year.

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College Prep Students Raise Sand at The Annual FROG Park Clean Up



FROG Park got a thorough trim and comb-out at the park's annual clean-up day, held Saturday, September 13, as freshman students from College Preparatory School grabbed rakes, brooms, clippers and trash bags and swept through the park in a dusty whirlwind of cleaning.

College Prep students have been involved in this clean-up since 2001 as participants in the school's community service program.

PHOTOS BY BOSKY FREDERICK, A MATH TEACHER AT COLLEGE PREP SINCE 1972.





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It's Your Betty... It's Your Kind of Place



Photo: Don Kinkead

The Neighborhood Merchant

by Theresa Nelson

Photo: Don Kinkead



It's Your Betty Boutique

Owner: Danielle Marinovich
5517 College Avenue, Oakland
510/597-9897
http://www.whosyourbetty.com
e-mail: info@WhosYourBetty.com

◂Danielle Marinovich holds volume 1 of a planned 8 volume set of "The Story of Betty," a series reflecting her life, and aimed at encouraging acceptance of others as individuals rather than seeing them as stereotypes.

Handmade, locally-designed, and utterly unique. That's the kind of clothing, accessories and art you'll find at It's Your Betty Boutique, tucked into a College Avenue storefront between Shafter and Forest.

It's Your Betty Boutique offers an unusual perspective: that too often people judge us based merely on age, ethnicity, gender, clothing or other elements of appearance, and that with effort, we can look deeper to the real person within. This translates into women's and children's clothing and accessories that are handmade, express the "Betty" concept, and feature items made by local artisans. Many of the items are priced at less than $20 – perfect for a quick birthday present or a spontaneous gift. The store won the East Bay Express 2008 award for "best retail service."

Owner Danielle Marinovich makes many of the items in the store herself, and originally offered them under the name "Stitches for Bitches," now presented as SFB on her Web site, www.WhosYourBetty.com. A few years ago at a convention where she sold her wares, she met the music star Pink, who liked the Betty character. Coverage in fashion and other magazines followed. Danielle, who lives not far from Rockridge, opened the store in 2006 as a place to sell her work and stay closer to home than was the case when she traveled and sold at conventions and shows all over the country.

The bright, colorful purses, wallets and clutches are all handmade by Danielle herself, and you'll often find her and other staff making things by hand behind the counter. These items are made in a wide variety of vinyls, which come in textures such as carbon fiber, metal flake, herringbone, even a white hammered vinyl (as in copper). In addition to what's in the store, you can order any of the items via her Web site in your choice of 14 colors, all handmade, in sizes from evening bags to larger totes.

Items for children have a special section of this small store. T-shorts and onesies, tiny shoes and accessories include slogans such as "chick magnet," "maternika" (a reference to Metallica), "for those about to walk, and more." Almost all of these are handmade by several friends of Danielle's.

Jewelry follows the handmade and locally-made theme, including decorated barrettes with dice or pink and black checks, beaded necklaces and earrings, and rings with Scrabble-like tiles. Throughout the store you'll find delicate silver necklaces, rings, bracelets, and earrings, spoon bracelets, unusual combinations like blue flowers with silver beads, and handmade pieces from Jungle Torch Song (another local artist). Hand-painted pottery by a local artist has themes such as "a room with a view," in platters, bowls, switch plates, and mugs. The suns and other wall hangings are made in Haiti from recycled oil drums, as are other imported items certified under the Fair Trade agreement.

Many of the black and white Betty items include a skull and crossbones, a design that has different meanings for different people, and is more popular now than when she started using it. The idea of the skull is to

▸ Merchant: It's Your Betty, page 12

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Reports: BART

from page 1

for the overhead tracks must be retrofitted to survive a 7.5 earthquake. First, the buried foundation will be excavated, and then expanded and reinforced with steel and concrete. After that, a steel jacket will be welded around the pillar above ground, similar to the freeway supports retrofitted by CalTrans several years ago.

With such extensive work going on in the parking lot, as many as 100 parking stalls at a time will not be usable. To ease the impact, BART plans to use attendants to park cars. By squeezing the vehicles close together in areas not affected by construction, BART hopes to keep the loss of parking to only 40 spaces. The parking procedures and hours of operation are still being worked out, but McArthur said there will be no additional fee for the attended parking. The lost spaces will be taken from the allotment of daily parking stalls. The number of reserved stalls will remain the same, as will the existing parking reservation program.

Noise was a major concern brought up by residents attending the meeting. McArthur explained that there will be a monitoring system in place, and residents are encouraged to call with their noise complaints. If the decibel limit is exceeded, a duty officer will have the authority to shut down the work and the contractor will be penalized. Most construction will take place between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., but some work — particularly work done to the station — will have to go on during the night.

Also of concern was the effect the construction would have on nearby Claremont Middle School. BART has met with Claremont principal David Chambliss three times to discuss security and safety for students. Halting construction during school hours was not practical, McArthur explained. "The faster this construction gets done and away from the school, the better for everybody," she said.

BART expects the work to start as early as November, but the actual construction schedule has not been determined by the contractor, the William P. Young Company of San Leandro. BART plans to distribute flyers to passengers and residents before any work begins. There will also be an information hotline at 510/874-7425. Residents can sign up for e-mail alerts and check the construction schedule at the BART Web site: www.bart.gov.

The $4.9 million project at the Rockridge station is just a small part of the entire BART earthquake retrofit program. Other raised track support columns throughout the Rockridge area will also be reinforced, including those at the intersection of Hudson Street and Claremont Avenue. This will affect Hardy Park and the casual carpool loading zone some time in the coming year. Part of the Hardy Park basketball courts and the dog run will be taken up by construction work, but the unaffected portions will remain open to the public. The carpool loading zone will be moved farther east on Hudson Street until the work is done.

The BART officials emphasized that the project will not be considered complete until all areas are returned to their original condition. BART will withhold 10% of the contract amount from contractors until the restoration is approved. Funding for the entire BART retrofit comes from Proposition AA, a $980 million bond measure passed in 2004 by voters in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties.

Reports: Plants

from page 1

plants to provide sufficient habitat for that wildlife.

In addition to glorious photographs of the local fauna, Baker brought in a sampling of attractive native plants and the "thug" plants to be avoided.

The California Native Plant Society holds its Native Plant Fair on Saturday, October 18, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Sunday, October 19, from noon to 3 p.m.

The fair will be held at Native Here Nursery, 101 Golf Course Drive (in Tilden Park across from the Golf Course), Berkeley; phone 510/549-0211. Visit their Web site at www.ebcnps.org, click on Native Here link. The fair is an excellent opportunity to see and to buy native plants and to learn more about them.

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RCPC's new e-News/e-mail tree has been keeping neighbors and residents informed about events on the RCPC calendar, RCPC Town Hall meetings, Land Use Committee meetings and events of general community interest for several months. It's a good way to learn about what's going on between issues of The Rockridge News and Town Hall meetings.



Have you been getting your copy? Is your neighbor getting one? Take a moment now to sign up; it's easy. Simply send your e-mail address to source@rockridge.org.

Also, RCPC gathers names at various RCPC-sponsored events and, with your permission, will add you to the e-list.

If you already get the e-News and you know someone who doesn't, let us know. We can add them to the mailing list and bingo! They're in!

All contact information is kept confidential and is used only by the RCPC for specific notifications.

Scene: Out & About in Rockridge



Photos: Don Kinkead

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Merchant: It's Your Betty

from page 9

convey the message of "we're all the same under the skin." A series of black and white T-shirts features the Betty character in various incarnations: skater Betty, jock Betty, daddy's girl Betty, hip-hop Betty, weekday worrier Betty, punk Betty, '80s Betty, biker Betty, and more. Her current window display showcases these characters, with the question "Who's Your Betty?" Many Ts feature other designs as well, includes one that says "Goodbye Kitty…. Hello Betty," a play on the commercial Hello Kitty items.

Her short book, "The Book About Betty," is dedicated to her sister, Stormy Marinovich-Coleman, who died from breast cancer. Supporting her sister through this, and her own grieving process, gave her the strength to seek something that would give meaning to her life and her drive to share the Betty concept with others. The Betty character came to her in a dream, as a girl with needles (Danielle is an accomplished seamstress), arising from her experience growing up in a small town where dressing or acting differently was hard. She developed it into a book with illustrations by Danny Boy, based on photos of Danielle as a child. The book is her passion: getting it into the hands of anyone who's interested in changing how people judge based on looks, to encourage people to look deeper to the real person.

Because her sister was the inspiration for the book and how the Betty character came to be, Danielle donates 5 per cent of all profits to the Susan G. Komen Foundation all year round. As one long-time customer said, "this is a little store, but a store with a lot of heart." Come to It's Your Betty Boutique and find your own Betty today.

Two-Car Rut

from page 6

at 25 mpg and $4 per gallon totals $150 a month. Depreciation of that car over 5 years with a residual value of $5,000 is about $250 a month. Of course, depreciation is a non-cash expense but it is a real devaluation of your asset. So, the total monthly "cost" of that $20,000 car is $864 plus gas, depending on how many miles are driven.

The average City CarShare customer spends $50-60 per month. At $5/hour and $0.40/mile, and for occasional use, the savings seem clear.

City CarShare offers a $30 trial program that is good for 60 days. The cost is applied as driving credits.

If you need a second car only now and then, you might consider City CarShare or similar shared ride opportunities. It's good for the environment, our neighborhood and your pocketbook. Find more information at http://www.citycarshare.org.

Zipcar is another independent car-share company operating in the Rockridge neighborhood. Their available rentals also park at the BART parking lot. Attempts to reach Zipcar's corporate headquarters in Massachusetts for this article were unsuccessful. Zipcar's Web address is http://www.zipcar.com.

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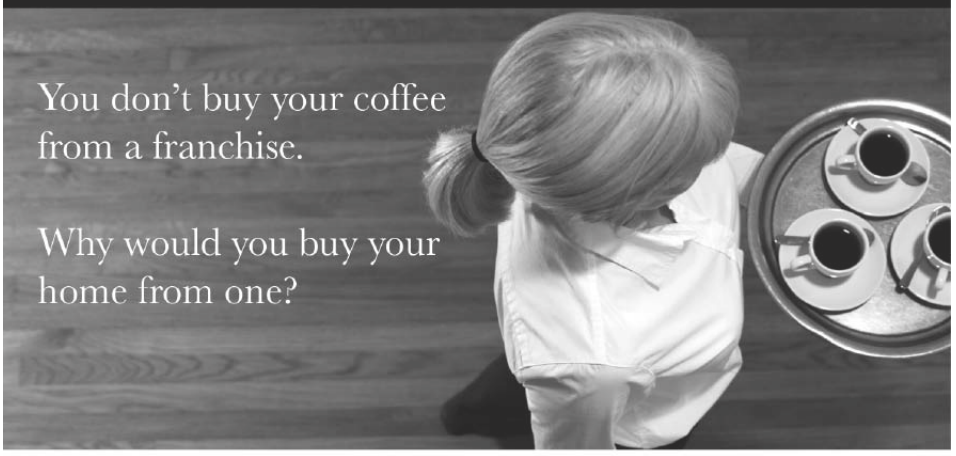
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E-mail *Rockridge News* Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210 (after noon), or mail to: *Rockridge News* Community Calendar, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Compiled by Jo Ellis

Councilmember Brunner's Community Advisory Meeting

Saturday, October 11, 10am to noon. Peralta Elementary School: 460 63rd St. (parking on Alcatraz, east of Telegraph). **Topic: AC Transit's Proposal for Bus Rapid Transit on Telegraph Ave. with and update on the City Budget.** Info: 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, 4th Thursday each month, 7 to 8:30pm. Rockridge Library, upstairs meeting room, 5366 College Ave. info@rockridgencpc.com or infofordenise@yahoo.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN:

- **Toddler Story Time: Every Saturday,** 10:30am.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am.
- **Pajama Story Time:** 2nd and 4th Tuesdays. 7pm.

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES:

- **Making Day-of-the-Dead Altars**: workshop with **Rachel Palacios**. Monday, Oct. 6, from 7 to 8pm. Best for ages 5 and up but all welcome to participate. Bring photos/mementos of friends, family or pets you would like to honor. Items will remain on display from 10/6 to 11/11.
- **Halloween Story Time:** Tuesday, 10/28 at 7pm. Spooky but not too scary Halloween stories and a little treat. **Everyone welcome to come in costume**.
- **Celebrate Recycling Month: Re-Create Workshop with MoChA**. Thursday, 11/6 at 3:30pm. Kids in Kindergarten through 12th grade can turn "Trash into Treasure", and enter their creations in the city-wide Re-Create Art Contest, where all entries will be on display throughout the city. Bring your own discarded materials or use what we provide. More info: 465-8770.

FOR TEENS:

- **Anime Club: Teens 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation) with other teens. 10/14, 5 to 6:30pm in upstairs meeting rm.
- **Teen Read Week is Oct. 12-18. Books with Bite**: check out displays about vampires, cooking, and computers and gaming. Bring a review of any book of Stephenie Meyer's Twilight Series and enter to win a ticket to the Twilight movie. Must have a current library card to be eligible.

Info: Susy, 597-5017.

FOR ADULTS:

- **Writers' Support /Critique Group:** ALL writers welcome. Third Saturday each month, (9/20) 1 - 5pm. Bring 12 copies of up to 5 pages of your prose for on-site reading/discussion. Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch (www.berkeleywritersclub.org.) Info: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.
- **Knitting Classes for Seniors (50+)**: 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. **Every Tuesday**, 12:30-2:30pm, upstairs meeting room.
- **Woody Guthrie and the Great American Folksong**: Author/performer **Tim Holt** presents a family program about the history of American folk songs, from the origins of our folk music from the British Isles and West Africa, through the songs of Woody Guthrie, and will sign copies of his books.
- **J. Gary Gwilliam**: successful attorney will sign and discuss his book, *Getting a Winning Verdict in My Life: A Trial Lawyer Finds His Soul*. Saturday, 10/25, 2 -4pm.
- **Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice**. First Tuesday each month from 6 to 8pm. Advance sign-up starts 5pm. **Cancelled on Nov. 4 for Election Day**. More info: 597-5017.

ART EXHIBITS

Gallery: Oct.: David Hardy: Atelier School of Classical Realism.

Nov.: Judith Mortensen: Pastel and mixed-media collage.

Lobby Display Case: Oct.: Photos of Rockridge.

Nov.: Asian-American Student Art.

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

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings

All events are FREE and open to the public.

Sunday, 10/5, 3pm: **Poetry Flash: Ellen Bass**: *The Human Line*, and **Jane Hirshfield:** *After*.

Mondays, 10/13 and 11/10, 7:30pm: **Amnesty International Meeting**. All welcome.

Monday, 10/13, 7:30pm: Presented in collaboration with KPFA; **Naomi Wolf**: *Give Me Liberty: A Handbook for American Revolutionaries*. **Note different location: First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley**.

Thursday, 10/16, 7pm: Oakland author **Van Jones**: *Green Collar Economy*.

Sunday, 10/19, 12pm: local mystery novelist **Clare Langley-Hawthorne**: *The Serpent and the Scorpion*.

Thursday, 10/30, 7pm: local authors and editors **Risa Nye, Joan Taylor Cehn** and **Julie Renalds**: *Writin' on Empty: Parents Reveal the Upside, Downside, and Everything in Between When Children Leave the Nest*. Mingle and meet other parents and share your own stories.

Sunday, 11/2, 3pm: **Poetry Flash**: poets **Jan Beatty** and **Molly Fisk** read aloud.

Wednesday, 11/5, 7pm: legendary surfer **Laird Hamilton**: *Force of Nature*.

DIESEL, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave. Info about other events, book discussion groups and El Grupito, the Spanish discussion group: 653-9965 or www.dieselbookstore.com.

Chabot Elementary Fall Carnival

Sunday, Oct 26, 11am to 3pm. Enjoy delicious food, games and activities for all ages; live music from local bands; fire department visit; BIG surprises. Proceeds benefit music, computer, art and garden programs and other school improvements. **Note new location**: because of renovations on Chabot campus, **Carnival will be at nearby Claremont Middle School, 5750 College Ave.** (across from Rockridge BART). Info: 879-1060 or www.chabotelementary.org

Rockridge Halloween Parade

Put on your costumes and join the annual Rockridge Halloween celebration on Sunday, Oct 26, from noon to 2pm. Meet in front of the College Ave Presb. Church, 5951 College Ave. at 11:45am. Go trick-or-treating along College Ave., listen to spooky stories and sing scary songs. Hosted by RCPC and The Rockridge District Assn.(RDA). See more details on page 5.

Women's Antique Vocal Ensemble (WAVE)

Concert of sacred and secular compositions from 200 years of English musical tradition, accompanied by guest artists on harpsichord and Baroque instruments. Saturday, 10/11, 8pm. Tickets, $15/10 at the door. St. Albert Priory Chapel, 6172 Chabot Road. 596-1800.

Jazz at the Chimes

Vocalist **Jamie Davis**, Sunday, 10/19, 2pm. Concert followed by artist's reception and refreshments. Tickets: $10-$15. **Kids under 12 free**. Cash only at the door starting at 12:30pm.Sponsored by the Lifemark Group Arts program that features Bay Area talent. Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. Wheelchair accessible. 228-3218 or www.lifemarkgroup.com/oakland/special_events.asp or www.unity-music.net/.

The Distaff Singers Annual Benefit Concert

The women's chorus will present *A Parody Home Companion*, a show that will take you back to the days when radio was king. Saturday, 11/1, 2pm. Tickets $15 - $12 (students and seniors) available in advance from chorus members or at the door. Donations to The Distaff Singers are tax-deductible. Oakland Mormon Temple Auditorium, 4770 Lincoln Ave. (take Redwood Rd. exit off Hwy 13). 547-8083 or www.distaffsingers.org.

Wisteria Ways House Concert Series

- **Amy X Neuberg, "Avant-Caberet"**: Sings and plays a unique blend of cabaret, classical, rock and avant-garde. Saturday, 10/18, 8pm; House opens 7:30pm. Inside venue (not wheelchair accessible).
- **Oscar Reynolds and Karumanta**: Ensemble of master musicians performing Bolivian folk and fusion and Black Bolivian/Peruvian. Saturday, 11/8, 8pm. House opens 7:30pm. Inside venue (not wheelchair accessible).

383 61st Street. $15-20 suggested donation for musicians (cash only at the door). Reservations (highly recommended): RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Christensen Heller Gallery

Botanical photographs by local artist **Bruce Schneider**; through 11/2. Gallery hrs: Wed.-Sat., 11am to 6pm; Sun., noon to 5pm. 5829 College Ave., www.christensen-heller.com 655-5952.

Oakland Bird Club

The public is invited to a free open meeting on Wednesday, 10/23 at 7:30pm. Jeff Robinson will give a slide presentation with bird calls on the Birds of Asia. Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Ave. Info: 444-0355.

Volunteers Needed at Chabot Space & Science Center

Next Adult Volunteer Orientation Session: Saturday, October 18, 10am - 12:30pm. You will complete a form, noting your experience and skills, and receive a volunteer handbook that will provide you with the history of the center and details about the program, job duties and benefits. Volunteer benefits include: free admission to the Science Center, Planetarium and Megadome Theater (like IMAX) shows. More info and to submit an application: www.chabotspace.org/volunteer, or contact Volunteer Manager Megan Gray, 336-7414 or mgray@chabotspace.org.

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