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THE Rockridge News

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☛ RCPC Wants *YOU!*

Q: Are you a Rockridge resident at least 18 years of age?
Q: Are you concerned about the future of the Rockridge area?
Q: Would you like to help make Rockridge even better than it is today?

If your answer to these three questions is "Yes," we may have a slot for you as a member of the Board of Directors of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC). RCPC represents Rockridge and its residents before the City of Oakland and other government agencies. Board members are elected each April by a vote of Rockridge residents. As usual, there are six seats up for

➧ RCPC Board, page 6

In My Opinion

Governor Calls for 4th Bore CEQA Exemption

Rockridge Mitigation Efforts Trumped?

by Ann Smulka, chair, Fourth Bore Coalition

Governor Schwarzenegger has used the current state budget crisis to add one more brick to the wall of distrust between Californians and their government leaders. He has told the Legislature that he'll veto any budget bill that doesn't exempt the Caldecott Tunnel fourth bore and other controversial infrastructure projects from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). His excuse is that these

➧ CEQA Exemption, page 10

BART Station Retrofit Underway



Photo: Don Kinkead

by Don Kinkead

District 3 BART Board Director and Rockridge resident Bob Franklin, above, points to the beginnings of the Rockridge station seismic retrofit construction program. When the project is completed, the station and tracks will be able to withstand a 7.5 magnitude earthquake. Proceding in stages, the retrofit work will first reinforce the

➧ BART Station, page 4

RCPC Town Hall Meeting AGENDA January 2009

Thursday, January 15, 7:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Avenue at Manila, Community Room (Upstairs)

■ RDA Speaks Out About Rockridge Businesses

Are you curious about how the economy is affecting local Rockridge businesses, or want to find out more about recent changes in retail and commercial businesses in Rockridge? Rockridge District Association (RDA) representatives Tiffany Copland and Chris Jackson will each speak about these topics and others, including safety and College Avenue events.

Tiffany is RDA's Executive Director and is in charge of events, public relations, marketing board meetings and

➧ Town Hall Agenda, page 4

WANTED

Land Use Committee Members

Do urban planning and zoning issues get your blood pumping? Does a large project getting built without proper code compliance trouble you? Do you want to contribute to the character of Rockridge? There could be a spot for you on the RCPC Land Use Committee (LUC). See the LUC report on page 3 for application details.

2009 Rockridge Kitchen Tour: the Search Begins

by Susan Montauk, Kitchen Tour co-chair

Rockridge is known for its many attractions including restaurants, shops, and residential architecture. Among the many businesses, specialty food and beverage stores occupy a special place in residents' and visitors' hearts (and stomachs).

Having such shops close at hand has, without doubt, led to broader styles of home cooking in the area. To do the best job they can, many residents have improved their kitchens with updated layouts, new appliances, and new ideas. The finished kitchens tend to reflect fresh ways of thinking about food and its preparation.

To celebrate these changes and to share design and equipment solutions for those who are planning their own changes – or who are simply interested observers, RCPC initiated its now regionally renowned Rockridge Kitchen Tour. Showcasing local architects,

➧ RCPC Kitchen Tour 2009, page 7

In My Opinion

Sidewalks, Street Trees and Liability

by Bob Brokl

At the federal level, all the talk has been about boosting infrastructure spending to lift the economy. In Oakland, property owners may be required to ante up the stimulus out of their own pockets.

A recommendation from City Attorney John Russo approved by the Public Works Committee on December 16 could force Oakland property owners to share liability with the City for sidewalk injuries, unless the accident was caused by sidewalk damage from City-planted street trees.

Under a 1911 state law, private property owners are responsible for the maintenance of sidewalks abutting their property. Now the City will require property owners to repair their sidewalks, or face the prospect of the City undertaking the repairs and putting a lien on the property. This new program will add money to the revolving sidewalk fund, whereby the City repairs the sidewalks of owners who don't quickly make repairs themselves and then collects liens.

According to the Public Works officials, 84% of the City's sidewalks are considered satisfactory, 16% are not. Seventeen % of the damage is attributed to tree damage, and 70% of this damage is said to be caused by official (approved) City trees.

Based upon the plan approved by the committee and to be heard by the full Council on January 20 (Inauguration Day), sidewalks on residential streets will not be repaired, except in special circumstances. Public Works has decided to concentrate for five years on repairing sidewalks on commercial corridors where, they say, the pedestrian traffic occurs. (Is it just a coincidence that these are the corridors favored for high-density condo projects that would be serviced by the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)?

Sixty-five per cent of the available money will go to these corridors, 20% will be for slip-and-fall complaints (after the fact?) and 15% will be for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complaints.

But not all stretches of the commercial corridors have much foot traffic, and some sidewalks seem to be in a constant state of repair; for example, the section of 51st Street between Telegraph and Broadway.

The prioritization seems to come from staff, but all the councilmembers on the Public Works committee voted yes, or abstained.

A court decision upholding San Jose's ordinance forcing private property owners to share financial responsibility for slip-and-fall injuries has encouraged Oakland to do the same. City attorneys indicated liability tied to street tree damage would be the City's responsibility in the event of litigation, but allowed that any smart attorney would go after the property owner and their insurance company, as well as the City.

Councilmember Nancy Kernighan acknowledged the many concerned calls and e-mails she had received from citizens, many not realizing sidewalk replacement was their charge, and noted Russo's own report showing the City only paid out some $260,000/year in liability claims, but voted yes.

Councilmember Henry Chang stated that many Hills residents don't realize "sidewalks" mean all the space including curbs, right-of-ways, etc., between the street and their property, but he voted in favor of the

➧ **Sidewalk Liability, page 12**

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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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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
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The Rockridge News, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618
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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
☛ **February 7, 2009**
☛ **February deadline is January 22.**

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

6013 Lawton Ave

Proposal: To construct a new 22' wide, 19' tall entry structure for an existing church complex located 1' from the front property line.

Contact: Peter Engel

Phone: 510/919-4333

Owner: Saint Peter's Church

Planning Permits Required: • Design Review in R-30 and S-4 zones for a new entry gateway structure to an existing church complex. • Minor Variance to allow an entry gateway in the required front setback area that exceeds the maximum 10' height and width

Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Property; Secondary Importance; Survey Rating "C3"

Case Planner: Ulla-Britt Jonsson, 510/238-3322 or ujonsson@oaklandnet.com

5867 Birch Court

Proposal: To legalize a 297 s.f. secondary unit constructed above an existing detached garage, located in the rear yard of a lot containing a single-family dwelling. (The project converts a legally conforming accessory structure into a nonconforming residential structure)

Contact: Abron Yates, Jr., 510/482-1425

Owner: Eugenia Escobar

Case File Number: DV08-268

Planning Permits Required: Regular Design Review to legalize a secondary unit

Minor Variances to legalize a structure containing habitable space with a rear yard of 3'-3" where 15 feet is required and a right side yard of 1'-8" where 5 feet is required

Zoning: R-35 Special Residential Zone

Environmental Determination: Exempt, Section 15301 of the State CEQA Guidelines

Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Property (PDHP)

City Contact: Ann M. Clevenger, Planner III, 510/238-6980 or aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

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On the Way to a Citywide Zoning Update: Mayor, City Council Take First Steps

by Stuart Flashman, chair, RCPC

Land use is an important issue in Rockridge, and the zoning ordinance is usually the primary law controlling land use. In Oakland, however, for the past 10 years that hasn't been the case. Instead, both neighborhoods and developers have had to deal with unpredictable land use decisions made by City staff and the Planning Commission on a project-by-project basis. That, however, may soon change.

The problem began in 1998 when Oakland adopted a new General Plan. If zoning is a city's land use law, the General Plan is its constitution. Normally, with a new General Plan would have come a revised zoning ordinance. Unfortunately, that didn't fit with then-mayor Jerry Brown's priorities. Instead, he put the zoning update on the back burner, and had the City Council pass an "interim" ordinance allowing the staff and Planning Commission to consider projects based on whatever zoning they felt best fit the General Plan's broad outlines.

Now, Mayor Dellums and the City Council are finally moving forward with the long-overdue zoning revision, with Assistant Planning Director Eric Angstadt and planner Neil Grey in charge.

Citywide Zoning, page 6

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets the fourth Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m., at the Rockridge Library.
Next meeting: Wednesday, January 28, 2009

Wanted: New Land Use Committee Members

Owing to resignations of committee members, the Land Use Committee (LUC) has openings for two new members. Committee members must live within the jurisdictional boundaries of RCPC (see http://rockridge.org for a map of RCPC boundaries). Members also need an understanding of basic land use concepts and an interest in preserving and enhancing Rockridge's human-scale environment. Mail your statement of interest to Chair, RCPC Land Use Committee, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618, or via e-mail to chair@rockridge.org. Deadline is January 30, 2009.

Project Updates by Stuart Flashman

■ Rockridge Montessori School Expansion Project (5616 Broadway)

The Rockridge Montessori School expansion would increase the school's potential enrollment from 132 to approximately 187 children. After hearing from the school and its neighbors at the November Town Hall Meeting and via e-mail, the LUC decided it was premature to take a position on the expansion itself, but felt that the potential for significant traffic, pedestrian safety, and shadowing impacts required preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). At its December meeting, the RCPC board of directors agreed and authorized a letter to the City requesting preparation of an EIR for the project.

■ College Avenue Safeway Rebuild (6310 College Avenue at College and Claremont Avenues)

After Safeway's stunning November announcement that it would not even consider a new store of less than 50,000 square feet (The Rockridge News, December 2008, p. 5), both the RCPC Land Use Committee and the RCPC board decided that Safeway needed to be told that a 50,000 square foot store was unacceptable. (The store's present size is about 24,500 square feet.)

Still under discussion is what to tell Safeway about its stakeholder process. The RCPC board feels that if that process were limited to dealing with a store of that size, further RCPC participation would be futile. However, a remodel or some other less ambitious project might still provide a useful focus for community discussion.

RCPC is in discussion with other community stakeholders about the direction to go from here.

Contact Stu Flashman at 652-5373 or stuflash@aol.com for a copy of the Land Use Committee meeting agenda.

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.

How can my neighborhood effectively fight an increase in rodents?

Editor:

There has been a major increase in rodents in our area. Part of this is due to the fact that one of the houses on Ocean View was occupied by a woman who was very sick and stopped being able to go out of the house or take her dog out, and the rats basically took over. I have seen a lot of rats on the street and running through the yards. We have started fighting the problem at our house by installing traps.

But this is, and should be, a neighborhood issue. Individually it is not possible to take care of the problem. We need cooperation on this and so I am hoping that we might let people know, through the paper, about this issue and formulate a plan.

Please let me know how the paper might address this issue.

— Ann Winterman

Editor's Reply:

Ms. Winterman, you and your neighbors should contact the Alameda County Vector Control Services District. Funded from property tax payments, the district is charged with the control of a variety of potentially health-threatening organisms. The mission of the department is "... to prevent human disease, injury, and discomfort to the Alameda County population by controlling insects, rodents, and other vectors ...."

Further information is available from the district's Web site at http://www.acvcsd.org. District offices may also be contacted by phone at 510/567-6800, or via e-mail at ehvector1@acgov.org. The office address is: Alameda County Vector Control Services District, 1131 Harbor Bay Parkway, Suite 166, Alameda.

It will be important for you and your neighbors to let Vector Control representatives know how widespread the problem is so that their response may be scaled appropriately. A response to just a household or two will not solve a widespread problem.

Thank you for your letter.

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Town Hall Agenda

from page 1

related administrative business. Chris, RDA's Operations Manager, handles streetscape concerns and maintains security coverage.

The RDA serves as the advisory board for Rockridge's Business Improvement District (BID), and is staffed by New City America, Inc. It utilizes assessments paid by businesses in the BID, and relies on volunteer work by business owners to carry out many of its activities.

Visit the organization's Web site at http://www.rockridgedistrict.com, then come to the Town Hall meeting on Thursday, January 15, 7:30 p.m., for more information about RDA's work with merchants in the heart of Oakland's Rockridge District.

BART Station

from page 1

station's stairways and escalators, and the canopy over the train platform. Subsequent work will reinforce every support column for the overhead tracks.

"Ironically," said Franklin, "the current economic environment has enabled BART to expand its seismic refit projects." The bids to retrofit the BART system have been extremely competitive, coming in at half the expected cost, he explained. "As a result, BART is able to expand its seismic safety program beyond its initial scope to additional parts of the District. The additional retrofit work will improve the survivability for an expanded portion of the BART system, including the Concord maintenance shop. If a large earthquake were to hit, access to an additional shop would help greatly in servicing cars and facilities on the Pittsburg/Bay Point line," Franklin said.

Current project information is available by phone at 510/874-7425, and at BART's construction information Web site: http://www.bart.gov/about/projects/eqs.

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Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

Culinary Resolutions

I'll exercise more — I'll lose weight — I'll reduce stress in my life... the annual ritual of making New Year's resolutions is again upon us. I thought it would be fun to consider some culinary New Year's resolutions.

Resolve to eat local and seasonal produce

Chefs know that, in January, it is best to use canned rather than fresh tomatoes. Unless you are willing to pay a fortune, tomatoes may look red, but they taste like potatoes. Sure, you can get "fresh" berries any time of the year, but if you're baking a pie in the winter, you're better off with frozen. Each season brings fruits and vegetables at their peak flavor. Best choices for winter produce include: beets, parsnips persimmons, pomegranates, turnips, apples and winter squash.

Resolve to cook a meal with a child

My dad had me at the stove at about 3 years of age making poached eggs. I started with my daughter when she was also about 3 years old, and now my 5-year-old granddaughter likes to cook and watch Ina Garten, the Barefoot Contessa. There are many wonderful children's cookbooks available at Pendragon and Diesel bookstores on College Avenue. Start with simple items like applesauce or soups. Breakfast is a great meal to cook with children: pancakes, waffles, muffins and eggs are easy to prepare and kids love to eat them.

Resolve to learn and cook a new ethnic dish each month

There is a Web site for every type of ethnic recipe. Shopping for the ingredients and spices is half the fun. We are fortunate in the East Bay to have so many ethnic markets: Ranch 99 for Asian; Mi Pueblo for Latin American; Korean markets on Telegraph Avenue; Tokyo Fish Market on San Pablo Avenue; two Persian markets on Solano Avenue; and Milan International on University Avenue for Indian spices. Try cooking a lamb stew with dried Omani lemons or preserved lemons found at Persian and Middle Eastern markets.

Resolve to cook a spectacular meal with a group of friends

I miss the '60s potluck dinners or having a group of friends over to cook a meal together. Many friends are forming cooking clubs where they shop and prepare an upscale meal together. Start in the morning creating the menu and doing the shopping. Prepare the meal in the afternoon. It is best to work in pairs. The meal should be a learning experience for everyone. Get recipes from different books or from the Internet. Use your best tableware.

Resolve to use new and exotic spices and herbs in your cooking

Have you ever used nigella seeds, Aleppo pepper, fenugreek, or sumac in your cooking? The *Field Guide to Herbs and Spices* identifies nearly 300 used throughout the world. Rather than simply follow a recipe when using new herbs or spices, it is best to actually taste them before you add them to the dish. Herbs and spices add nuanced flavors to a dish; knowing what they taste like on their own helps to balance the flavor. A simple rule I learned in culinary school is that less is more. Continually taste the food as you are cooking, as many spices intensify their flavor when exposed to heat.

Have a happy and healthy New Year.

Try this recipe when you're serving Indian cusine.

Date–Tamarind Chutney

- 1 cup of pitted dates
- ½ cup of tamarind pulp (available at Yasai Market)
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- Salt to taste

Combine dates and tamarind pulp in just enough cold water to cover. Soak for 30 minutes. Blend the mixture, and strain. Stir in coriander, brown sugar and salt to taste.

Barry Kaufman is graduate of the California Culinary Academy. Barry is available for cooking classes. His email is kaufman42@earthlink.net

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City Convenes a Public Economic Roundtable

Wednesday, January 14, 2009: 7 – 9pm
Oakland City Hall, Council Chambers

Councilmember Jane Brunner's office has announced a forum open to the public that will address the current economic situation, how it affects Oakland and how the City and the public might respond.

Convened by Mayor Ron Dellums, Councilmember Brunner and Assemblymember Andre Swanson, the forum is entitled "A Progressive Perspective on the Economic Crisis."

Dr. Steven Raphael of the UC School of Public Policy and other speakers have also been invited.

Forum speakers will consider the following topics:

- What are the key economic issues facing the City of Oakland and the State?
- How will the recent bailouts affect urban communities like Oakland?
- What should be included in the new Administration's economic stimulus package to address the needs of urban communities?
- How can we use the current crisis to work towards creating a more equitable and sustainable economy in the future?

For more information, contact Councilmember Jane Brunner at 510/238-7001 or jbrunner@oaklandnet.com.

Citywide Zoning

from page 3

As a first step, Angstadt has set up two technical advisory groups (TAGs), one for residential and one for commercial areas.* These panels, made up of representatives from different Oakland constituencies Oakland, have been charged with identifying issues to be addressed in the update. Thanks to our City Council member, Jane Brunner, RCPC has representation on both panels. RCPC Chair Stuart Flashman sits on the commercial TAG, while Land Use Committee member and former Planning Commissioner Glen Jarvis is on the residential TAG.

Each group has now had one meeting. The residential group's first meeting was largely devoted to a staff review of the current zoning and issues that staff had identified as needing review. The commercial group's first meeting included a similar review, but also left considerable time for TAG members to point up what members felt were important issues.

Issues raised by TAG members included the following (in no particular order):

- the importance of thinking about parking requirements and how they affect development
- using incentives to promote community benefits
- setting height and density limits so they take into account the increased height and density that bonuses might allow
- providing buffering for high-impact uses
- recognizing infrastructure (roadways, transit, water, sewer, etc.) limits in setting development density
- encouraging adaptive reuse of existing buildings
- using transfer of development rights to protect historic properties
- allowing "flex" in the zoning for later changes.

The next meeting of the TAGs will probably be some time in the early spring, though no specific date has yet been set.

Sign up for the RCPC e-news to make sure you are kept up to date on developments. Go to RCPC's Web site at http://www.rockridge.org and click on the "Join Email List" button. You will be asked only for your e-mail address.

*City staff has prepared two papers; one for residential and one for commercial issues. Both papers are posted on the RCPC Web site at http://www.rockridge.org. Select: Citywide zoning update.

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RCPC Board

from page 1

election. Board directors serve for a two-year term (uncompensated) and are expected to attend Board meetings (usually once a month) and participate in RCPC committees and other activities. RCPC is a tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation.

If you are interested, send a short statement of interest, including contact information, to RCPC Board Elections, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618, or e-mail chair@rockridge.org.

Statements of interest must be received no later than 5 p.m. Friday, February 13. Questions may be addressed to the above e-mail address, or by leaving a voicemail message at 510/869-4200.

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Rockridge Real Estate Holds Steady

by Ortrun Niesar

The spectre of falling real estate values and home sales nationwide has caused sleepless nights for many during these past two years. But the news is not all that bad for Rockridge home owners, as our survey of the past five years shows.

Statistics show that Rockridge, despite overall negative regional reports for Alameda County, remains a localized bright spot that does not conform to national or even regional real estate market profiles.

Sales of single-family homes did decrease by about 20% in 2008. That was to be expected; inventory was also consistently below normal. But prices did not fall appreciably. In fact, the best homes often received several offers and were sold at slightly over asking. The bottom line is: the Rockridge housing market appears to be holding steady, as do the Elmwood, the Uplands, Claremont and the Berkeley Hills markets among other East Bay areas.

This may be important to know for homeowners who have received form letters in the mail recently advising them that their equity lines have been curtailed because of serious devaluation of their homes in the current market. If this has happened to you, explore the validity of the claims made by your lender. If you can rebut the assumption of devaluation, by all means do so. You may find that your bank will reconsider.

Comparative Sales Analysis

Compare Rockridge sales price averages for detached single-family homes over the last five years. Current prices are approximately at 2005 levels. If you have owned your home for five years or more you are in good shape. Average price per square foot, a good measure to use for a quick thumbnail evaluation, came in at $593 for 2-bedroom homes, $517 for 3-bedroom homes, and $454 for homes with four bedrooms or more. Remember, the larger the home, the lower the price per square foot is likely to be, since other factors such as lot size will likely not change significantly. To assure an accurate valuation of your home for loan refinancing, an appraisal will be necessary. Check with your lender.

Outlook for 2009

Will this be a good year to get back into the real estate market? The answer may very well be yes for both buyers and sellers. The incentives are out there. But be aware of several important factors. For one, while the federal government is committed to bringing interest rates down to the lowest level since the late 1950s to reinvigorate the real estate market, the banks are moving cautiously, considerably tightening borrower and property qualifications. You will see borrowing standards that were familiar in the early '90s. Be prepared to respond to questions about gifted down payment money, and expect serious employment and earned-income scrutiny. Debt-to-income ratios will have been lowered. Further, the house you have in mind may not qualify for a loan if comparable sales in the area cannot support the asking price either because there have been few recent sales in the area or repossessed homes have significantly skewed local home values. Also, the thresholds for conforming limited and jumbo loans have been reset to $417,000 and $625,000 respectively as of the beginning of 2009. That dream Rockridge home may thus still be out of your financial reach. On the other hand, a substantial down-payment could smooth your way to success. And a 4.5% interest rate for 30-year fixed-rate loans should become a reality shortly. FHA loans requiring a mere 3% down will be available for buyers whose personal credit is excellent and whose job situations are secure.

For those staying put and carrying loans at 6.5% or higher, this is certainly the time to consider refinancing. Check with your existing lender if it has not already contacted you about re-writing your loan at a lower rate at no or minimal cost.

Average Sale Prices by Number of Bedrooms

Year	2BR	3BR	4+BR	Number of Homes Sold
2005	$ 802,513	$ 956,722	$ 1,466,920	124
2006	760,782	962,488	1,498,687	112
2007	780,268	986,895	1,330,031	127
2008	757,011	921,476	1,329,080	98

Comparing Rockridge Home Sale Prices 2002-2008

Year	Average Price	% Change	Median Price	% Change
2002	$ 770,604		$ 691,500	
2003	847,637	9.9	750,000	8.5
2004	902,000	6.4	805,000	7.3
2005	1,032,139	14.4	930,500	15.6
2006	1,111,317	7. 6	903,500	- 3.0
2007	1,106,186	- 1.0	1,000,000	10.3
2008	1,029,153	- 7.0	905,000	- 9.5

This analysis covers Rockridge homes sales from the Berkeley border in the north, south to Broadway Terrace and 51st Street, west to Telegraph and east to Highway 13. Information supplied by EBRD 2008 is deemed to be reliable but not guaranteed. Ortrun Niesar is a Realtor with Prudential California: ortrun.niesar@prurealty.com.

RCPC Kitchen Tour 2009

from page 1

innovative and classic appliances, and a variey of new kitchen styles, the tour draws visitors from throughout the Bay Area.

This September heralds the eighth biennial kitchen tour since the first was held in 1995. Once again, the tour will proudly feature nine newly-renovated or remodeled Rockridge home kitchens.

Past tours have featured exquisite kitchens of all sizes and budgets, from bungalow style to contemporary, and beyond.

If you have or can recommend a "new" or "classic" kitchen, the RCPC invites you to submit it now for consideration for the September 2009 Rockridge Kitchen Tour.

For more information, contact us at kitchentour@rockridge.org, or call RCPC at 510/869-4200, attention Kitchen Tour.

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When Words Collide: Communicating with Your Pet

"I say it's kibble and I say the hell with it."

by Janet Somers with Fluffy the Cat

Do you wish your pet could talk? Apparently, many people think theirs can.

A poll recently released by the Associated Press and Petside.com found that a majority of people with companion animals think they and the creatures understand each other's lingo.

Not surprisingly, residents of Rockridge and its environs are no exception.

"I can tell just from the look on his face exactly what he wants, or by the speed of his tail," Temescal resident Leigh Poindexter says about her poodle.

Eighteen-year-old Nora Daly also claims to have good communication with her family's five cats, and even offers a key to their vocabulary.

"The meows tend to be happy, sad, or worried," she says. "The happy meow is short but it uplifts at the end – it starts low and then goes to a higher pitch. But the sad meow is really drawn out -- it starts out high and then it drops, almost like it's begging. The worried meow, it's usually even longer than the sad meow, but it's high-pitched and it stays high pitched." Daly, a senior at Oakland Tech, explains that each cat has his or her own variations on this scheme.

She believes cats communicate with their humans better than dogs. "Dogs only really respond to 'happy' or 'mad,' sort of a 'good boy,' 'bad boy' situation," she says. "Cats don't take direct commands, but I think they understand what we mean better. They're complex, more so than dogs."

But Larry Rothe, a veterinarian who lives in Rockridge, says he speaks directly more to his canine than to his feline patients. "I talk directly to the cats less than to the dogs," he says. "I'll say [to a dog], 'I'm just gonna put you on the table,' or 'I'm just gonna look in your ear.' But the cats know what's going on. They intuit things."

In that vein, Rothe gives credence to the intuitive talents of animal psychics. "On the animal psychic stuff, I believe it, but I don't do it," he says. "I believe pets are as smart as we are in many ways. If they burn their finger once, they don't go near the fire again. They have the same emotions as we do – fear, love, grief. You see it on a dog['s face] more than on a cat. You don't see it on a rabbit."



Sarah Jackson has good communication with her cat Seamus.

Photo: Janet Somers

In keeping with the poll, which found that fewer men than women say they understand their pets' language, JB Brantome thinks this whole animal communication business is hogwash. "Communication?" he says. "You mean like when I scream, 'No, down, bad kitty'?"

Brantome is a cardiovascular intervention specialist who lives in Rockridge with his girlfriend, environmental researcher Sarah Jackson, and the couple's two cats. The way Jackson tells it, she and one of the cats, Seamus, understand each other perfectly. And if Seamus chooses to ignore her, that's just his feline prerogative.

"He understands a lot but he chooses what to do and what not to do," she says.

But Brantome holds a different view. "Seamus, when he wants something, he will annoy you," he says. "He'll jump up on the countertop or on top of the fireplace and he'll start making noise, knocking something over that he knows will make a lot of noise. Like early in the morning, if he wants to be fed, he'll walk across the computer keyboard. He knows you're looking at it.

"He's like, 'You gonna feed me now? No? OK,' and he'll tip over the coffee mug or the jar of pencils. 'What about now?' It works, too. Eventually I have to give in.

"Sarah's sense is that's just what cats do. She's in complete denial. The cat has us completely trained."

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THE STAIRWAYS OF ROCKRIDGE

ENDURING GIFTS FROM THE PAST

BY BILL KAUFNER

East of Upper Broadway, there are public paths and stairways built long ago and given romantic names (Verona Path), visually descriptive names (Ridgeview Path, Buena Vista) and mystifying names (Gando Path, Ratondo Path). Leading ever upward from flatter land, the paths link streets and, as one climbs higher, provide fabulous views of the bridges, the Bay, and the hills. All together, there are 16 or more paths and stairways meandering through Upper Rockridge. Most are in good condition, although a few require the walker/stair climber to mind winter debris and loose handrails. The good news is these paths and stairways provide the intrepid roamer with a myriad of architectural styles and landscape designs to ponder, not to mention the health benefits of vertical aerobic activity.

The earliest stairs were originally built to serve the rapidly expanding "trolley car suburb" that was Rockridge in the years after the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. They were an integral part of the streetcar suburbs at a time when the car was not the main factor in urban design, according to Eric Uddenberg, an Oakland Public Works project manager who designed a set of rebuilt stairs in the Glenview District. Most stairs were built during the 1920s and 1930s.



On Prospect Steps off Rockridge Boulevard. (Buster the Dog checks to confirm he is not alone in the wilderness.) PHOTO: DON KINKEAD

Public stairways in hilly Bay Area neighborhoods were also created by developers as shortcuts that pedestrians could take to avoid the long switchback roads built to the grade of the hillsides. Stairs also linked neighborhoods and provided walkable routes to shopping areas.

I once took a Claremont Middle School hiking club on an urban hike that started at the Rockridge Gates on Broadway, went up Rockridge Boulevard to the Prospect Steps and West Lane, then along Alpine to Locarno Path. We returned via Ocean View Avenue and Margarido Drive, bouncing down Ridgeview Path to return to Rockridge Boulevard.

The students and their teacher-sponsor were exhausted but happy to learn that urban hikes could be not only physically demanding but also visually stimulating. In fact, I would challenge any fit person to take this route and not realize aerobic gains. It is an outdoor gym that is heart-healthy and fun in any weather.

To learn more about the paths and bicycle routes – including street grades – of Oakland, look for the excellent *Walk Oakland Map & Guide* available at local bookstores. There is a companion map, *Berkeley's Pathways Map,* that you can also find in Berkeley bookshops.

Want more? Delve into *Hidden Walks in the East Bay and Marin: Pathways, Essays, and Yesterdays* by Stephen Altschuler (Great West Books, 2001).

Bill Kaufner is a retired Claremont Middle School administrator and RCPC boardmember.

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CEQA Exemption

from page 1

projects need to move forward quickly. "We've got to act on behalf of the people," he said, adding further, "and what we have to do is, we have to create jobs as quickly as possible, stimulate the economy." But exempting these huge projects from environmental review would be penny wise and pound foolish.

The Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore project is a prime example of what's wrong with this approach. It is precisely because Caltrans failed to address the impacts this project will have on the communities and environment along the Highway 24 corridor that the Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore Coalition (FBC) filed a legal challenge under CEQA. The Governor wants a complete CEQA exemption for this and other major construction projects, with no attempt to address the environmental damage that would result.

Using the budget crisis to eliminate environmental safeguards is tantamount to extortion. It also ignores the benefits CEQA has provided in the past; for example, replacing Caltrans' damaging proposal for a Devil's Slide bypass on Highway 1 by what everyone now agrees is a far better tunneling project.

Project's EIR Disregarded Rockridge Schools

The issue with the Caldecott Improvement Project is not whether a fourth bore should be built, but to acknowledge and mitigate the project's impacts on nearby schools, residents, and the natural environment. Caltrans' environmental impact report (EIR) for the project closed its eyes to the project's impacts.

The EIR, in promoting the project's traffic benefits, considered traffic operations over the entire length of the Highway 24 corridor. Yet, at the same time, Caltrans refused to include in the EIR's analysis the impacts on schools and other sensitive receptors immediately adjacent to Highway 24, claiming they were too far from the actual construction. Claremont Middle and Anthony Chabot Elementary Schools, as well as other local schools and parks, are already subjected to hazardous air and noise pollution impacts from the highway, impacts that will be made even worse by this project. Excluding the noise and air-quality impacts of project-generated traffic on these schools, as well as on thousands of other nearby residents, is unconscionable.

A governor who is allegedly passionate about helping kids and who claims a leadership role in creating a greener environment should not be offering Caltrans a blank check

"...exempting these huge projects from environmental review would be penny wise and pound foolish."

to do the damage and not the repair.

The Governor also ignores the fact that measures to mitigate project impacts will also involve construction and, indeed, will increase the number of jobs the project will generate. If the Governor is truly interested in effective economic stimulus, he should include mitigating the adverse impacts of the project on the health and safety of children, pedestrians, bicyclists, and residents along the corridor.

Exempting the fourth bore from CEQA means the project will be built with total disregard for its environmental costs. Indeed, the Governor's blanket CEQA exemption may even eliminate the token mitigation Caltrans had agreed to in order to obtain the City of Oakland's non-opposition to the project.

If our Governor truly believes in protecting and improving the environment, he needs to retract this unconscionable exemption proposal and restore our trust in his leadership. If the voters cannot trust the State government here, what are we voters to think when the Governor asks our support for other potentially damaging projects like a peripheral canal or a new dam?

We must keep our environmental protections in place and build wisely, not rashly.

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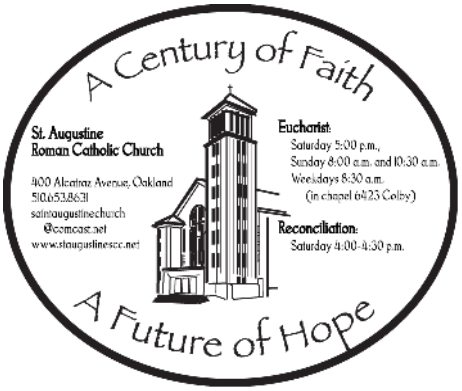

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Always Room For One More Story Time at the Library

by Gay Ducey, Children's Librarian, Rockridge Branch Library

Story Time is the place that children, books and an adult ready to cut up make a transitory community for about a half an hour. A lot happens there. The adult reads wonderful books tailor-made for the audience, the children see an adult who enjoys, really enjoys reading and kids. The books are punctuated with songs, stretches and that activity peculiar to story times: the so-called finger play. You know…Thumbkin and the Intsy Weentsy Spider and such-like.

In the course of the programs, children see and hear literature, as well as absorb rhyme, rhythm and chant in activities. It is joyful and fun, but it is fun with intent. We strive to infuse young minds with language and image, the better to enrich them and to pave the way for the reading to come. But the first goal is to give children the opportunity to enjoy themselves, to see books as a pleasure.

We are fortunate at Rockridge to have three sorts of story times: Toddler, Preschool and Pajama. The first two are, well, for those age groups, and the third welcomes children from about 3 to 7 as well as parents and caretakers. Toddler is designed for children who toddle around and up to 2 years or so. The program is laced with lots of songs to sing at home and stretches too. The books and activities for Preschool story time are chosen for children from 2-½ through 5 years.

We have always felt we needed another toddler story time, and now we have an opportunity to provide it. Our children's area is jammed with small energetic participants for the preschool story time, and we have noticed an increase in nannies and parents with children from birth to a little under 2. We know that these small patrons would be better served by a story-time that reflects their interests and ages. The good news is we can provide that service beginning in January.

On the first and third Wednesdays we will present both a preschool and a toddler story time, and both will begin at 10:30 and conclude at 11. The preschool session will continue to be in the children's picture book area. The toddler story time will be upstairs in the community meeting room where tiny ones can toddle around as necessary and caretakers will have plenty of room too.

Good news, isn't it? We think so and we hope you will pass it along to folks who might like to attend.

Sidewalk Liability

from page 2

proposal anyway.

Councilmember Nancy Nadel was the most reluctant to send the matter to Council before more citizen outreach, and abstained.

Councilmember Desley Brooks pushed hard to have the matter sent to Council. She asked Dan Gallagher, Tree Supervisor in Public Works, to verify the City did indeed have records of most street trees planted. He said they were on 3x5 notecards at the 7101 Edgewater Service Center. Gallagher said anyone could make an appointment to look at the files. His phone is 510/615-5856, e-mail is dgallagher@oaklandnet.com.

So, if you have a sidewalk problem, you may be forced to fix it, or have the City do it and put a lien on your property. If you have sidewalk damaged by an official tree, you'll likely wait years for repairs.

Currently the City is committed to repairing street tree-damaged sidewalks three times, then it's your problem. We'll worry in 300 or so years. And why not call and e-mail the Councilmembers about the scheduling conflict with Inauguration Day and suggest they change the date?

Bob Brokl has lived in the Temescal District for 36 years and takes a great interest in civic affairs.

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To Bike or Not to Bike?

In Oakland's Mediterranean Climate, Almost Any Day is a Good Day to Bike. Besides, Spring is Just Around the Corner

by Bill Kaufner

Are you seeing more bicycles on the streets these days? As a result of increased fuel costs, many Californians are bringing old bikes out of the garage or purchasing new ones. Regardless of the fluctuations in gasoline prices, many other folks have decided to abandon the automobile and really go green. Nationwide, bicycle shops are seeing a 52% increase in sales and service.

A number of people are also taking up cycling for the health benefits it can provide. Many communities are working to provide better and safer bicycle routes for riders and legislation that can fund these improvements. Yet, taking the plunge and becoming a bike commuter or even a casual rider can be daunting.

Of primary concern is the simple act of riding a bicycle in an environment shaped and designed for automobiles. There are also issues of theft, weather, and arriving at one's destination in need of a shower. Many bike commuters have overcome these hindrances through the use of helmets, lights, fenders, locks, storage lockers, and rain gear. Progressive employers have installed showers and given financial incentives for green commuting. Recent federal transportation legislation provides for companies to rebate $20 per month to their bicycle-commuting employees.

To create greater separation of bicycles and automobiles, Oakland has marked certain streets as bicycle routes. A popular route through Rockridge to central and downtown Oakland begins in Berkeley on Hillegass Avenue and connects through Colby and Forest to Shafter, thence to West MacArthur followed by a short jog onto Webster and through Pill Hill to exit on Broadway at 27th Street.

For recreational cycling there are the Ohlone bicycle path through Berkeley to Albany and the fabulous Bay Trail that starts in Emeryville and ends at Marina Bay in Richmond.

Committed road bike riders often pedal along Upper Broadway past Lake Temescal and over the Caldecott Bridge to Old Tunnel Road, which ends at the top of the Oakland Hills. On weekends, you will be in the company of hundreds of cyclists on this route.

A non-comprehensive listing of local bike shops to help you and your family get started includes: Hank & Frank, 6030 College Avenue; The Bent Spoke, 6124 Telegraph Avenue; Left Coast Cyclery, 2298 Domingo Avenue at Ashby in Berkeley; and Montano Velo, 4266 Piedmont Avenue.

If you want to save money, reduce your carbon footprint, and get fit, start cycling. But start with a helmet and a well-equipped bicycle that is the right size for you. Start small, perhaps riding on bicycle paths first. As your skills improve, ride on quiet streets before moving into the mainstream. A world of cycling opportunities awaits.

Bill Kaufner is a retired Claremont Middle School administrator and RCPC boardmember.

Bicycling Support and Information

- **Hands-on Bicycle Classes:** Sundays, January 11 & 25; 10 am-11 am. Learn how to maintain your bike. Bring your bike and tools. We'll provide the expert guidance. REI Berkeley Bike Shop 510/527-4140. Free; Registration not required
- **East Bay Bicycle Coalition:** Promoting bicycling as an everyday means of transportation and recreation since 1972
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Photo: Don Kinkead



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5972 Chabolyn Terr	3/3	$915,000	$900,000	50	$985,000
6120 Hillegass Ave	3/2	$1,095,000	$1,065,000	13	$1,095,000

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RockridgeResidents.Org

We're a non-profit, no-ad based website intended to increase the sense of community between Rockridge Residents. Connect with neighbors on the Online Forums. Read resident-submitted articles, review local businesses. Visit www.rockridgeresidents.org today!

Jazz and Classical Piano Lessons

Jazz and classical piano lessons from Rockridge jazz pianist with B.A. in music from U.C. Berkeley, 15 years experience teaching and performing. Reasonable rates, patient, dedicated. All ages welcome. Janet 653-6783.

Top-Notch Math Tutoring

Middle, high, home-school, college.Help with classes, enrichment for advanced students. Clear interactive communication, 60-minute hours. Over twenty years' experience. Education: M.I.T. (S.B.), U.C. Berkeley (Ph.D.). Please contact Dan, TNTutor@earthlink.net or 510/420-8948.

Kindergym Playdays for Under 3s

Come join us for climbing, sliding, ball pits, fire engines, rocking horses, parachute, songs, stories, bubbles and more. Dawn at 547-7726. www.tbaoakland.org/kindergym ALL families welcome!

Driver for Hire

Need to go shopping, to the airport or visit the doctor? For reliable, courteous service, call 510/841-2891. Your car or mine. References available.

Help with your PC or Mac

College student can help you in your home. Affordable rates. Experienced & patient. Routine scans/maintenance $35/hr. Internet applications training, repairs & upgrades $25/hr. Call Tony, 653-1079. Rockridge only.

V & V Trim & Flooring

Update your home with Crown Moulding and baseboard. We specialize in finished carpentry, wood, laminate, bamboo or tile floors. Ask about our special offer. Licensed & Bonded. 510/366-5253.

Spiritual Journey

Join us on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje and the shrine of Our Lady of Peace, International Youth Festival (all ages), July-August, 2009. Visit www.MyUITour.com or call 866/984-8687. CST: 2070359-40.

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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. **Compiled by Jo Ellis**

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Roundtable Discussion

"A Progressive Perspective on the Economic Crisis" featuring, **Mayor Dellums, Councilmember Jane Brunner, Assemblymember Swanson, Dr. Steven Raphael** from UCB School of Public Policy and others. Topics include key economic issues facing Oakland and the State; bailouts; a new stimulus package. Wednesday, 1/14, 7 to 9pm. Oakland City Hall, City Council Chambers. More info: Jane Brunner, 238-7001 or jbrunner@oaklandnet.com.

N'hood 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, 7-8:30pm. 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. NOTE: New additional Toddler Story Time on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 10:30am in the upstairs Community Meeting Room (same days and times as pre-school Story Time).**
- **Pre-School Story Time**: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am.
- **Pajama Story Time**: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7pm (see special event on 2/10).

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR CHILDREN:

- **Annual Valentine Making Workshop**: bring colorful paper scraps and list of "loved ones." We also provide paper and envelopes. All ages welcome – if under 8, please bring an adult. Friday, 2/6, 3:30 to 5pm.
- **Celebrate Black History Month**: (and in anticipation of the City-wide "Big Read") **James Henry** of Drummm! presents a musical history of percussion in African and African-American cultures. All ages welcome. Tuesday, 2/10, 7pm.

FOR TEENS:

- **Rockridge Ninjas (Anime Club): Teens 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation) with other teens. Second Tuesday each month (1/13), 5 to 6:30pm in upstairs meeting rm. Info: Susy, 597-5017.

FOR ADULTS:

- **Writers' Support/Critique Group**: ALL writers welcome. Bring 12 copies of up to 5 pages of your prose for on-site reading/discussion. Third Saturday each month (1/17), 1 to 5pm. 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.
- **Lawyers in the Library: Free legal advice**. First Tuesday each month from 6 to 8pm. Advance sign-up starts 5pm. More info: 597-5017.

ART EXHIBITS

Gallery: Jan.: **Michael Che**: Impressionistic landscapes and animals.

Feb.: **Katie Koretzer**: Oil and watercolor.

Lobby Display Case:

Jan.: "Season of Non-Violence" display.

Feb.: **Leila Warhoftig**: prints and handmade paper objects.

LIBRARY HOURS:

Mon. and Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.

Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 10am to 5:30pm.

Fri., 12 to 5:30pm. **Closed Sundays** and **Monday, 1/19**.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings/Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

Tuesday, 1/6, 7pm: **Paul Miller (aka DJ Spooky):** *Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture with CD*.

Sunday, 1/11, 3pm: media and intellectual property atty. **Joshua Kolton** and journalist **Josh Wilson** will conduct a discussion on the First Amendment and its effects on and relationship between society and the media.

Thursday, 1/22, 7pm: **Susie Bright**: *X: The Erotic Treasury*.

Sunday, 1/25, 3pm: **Poetry Flash** with **John Isles**: *Inverse Sky*.

Thursday, 1/29, 7pm: **Peter Phillips** and **Mickey Huff**: *Censored 2009: The Top 25 Censored Stories of 2007-08*.

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.

Christensen Heller Gallery

"Tapestries," featuring the beautiful fiber art of **Boisali Biswas**. Now through Jan. 15. Gallery hrs: Wed.-Sat., 11am to 6pm; Sun., noon to 5pm. 5829 College Ave., www.christensenheller.com 655-5952.

An Evening with the Peace Corps

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. Information session: Tues., 1/27, 6 to 7:30pm, Rockridge Library, 5366 College Ave. More info: Nick Bosustow, 452-8444, nbosustow@peacecorps.gov, or www.peacecorps.gov.

Gala Inaugural Ball

Celebrate with Obama Campaign volunteers and supporters. Live music, hors d'oeuvres, no-host bar, Inaugural highlights on screen. Cocktail attire, please. Tuesday, 1/20, 7:30 to 11pm. Advance tickets $35 at www.brownpapertickets.com/event/51898; order online no later than 1/13 for mail delivery. After 1/13, available tickets $45 at the door. Sorry, no babies or children under 16. Montclair Women's Cultural Arts Club, 1650 Mountain Blvd. Valet parking. Info: vickyfriedman@yahoo.com.

Wisteria Ways Concert Series

Harpist **Diana Rowan**, joined by other musicians and vocalists. Music inspired by Eastern European, Middle Eastern and Western classical traditions. **Philip Gelb** will open with a short set of traditional and modern music for shakuhachi. Sunday, 1/18, 3pm. House opens 2:30pm. $15-20 suggested donation for musicians (cash please at the door). 383 61st Street (inside venue, not wheelchair accessible). For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Jazz at the Chimes

Featuring vocalist **Ellen Robinson**, joined by Murray Low on piano, Sam Bevan on bass, Bud Spangler, drums and Kristen Strom on saxophone. Sunday, 1/18, 2pm, followed by artist's reception and refreshments. Tickets: $10-$15 for concert and reception. 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. Free parking. More info at 228-3218 or www.lifemarkgroup.com/oakland/special_events.asp.

Singers Wanted

The Distaff Singers, the Bay Area's longest-running women's choral group, is seeking new members. No auditions necessary, just the ability to match pitch. Practice Tuesdays, 7:15 to 9:15pm at St. Theresa Church on Clarewood Ave. A benefit concert in the fall supports local K-12 music programs. Info: Carola Ingram, 547-1191 or www.distaffsingers.org.

American Red Cross

- **Volunteer Orientations**: Tour the Oakland Blood Center. Learn how to: serve, inform and thank blood donors; deliver blood; call donors; special projects. Wed. 1/7, 10am to noon; Tues. 1/13 or Wed. 1/21, 6 to 8pm, 6230 Claremont Avenue (across from College Ave. Safeway). Info or to sign up: Anne at 594-5165 or BlackstoneA@usa.redcross.org.
- **Donate blood: Mobile blood drive**: Wed. 1/28, 10am to 4pm, Calif. College of the Arts parking lot, 5212 B'way. Call 800-GIVE LIFE or go to www.BeADonor.com (Code: CCAOAKLAND) to schedule an appt.

Chabot Space & Science Center

Volunteers wanted to assist visitors and share their wonder of the Universe with others. **No science or astronomy background needed** – extensive training opportunities available. Call the volunteer department at 336-7414 or visit www.chabotspace.org.

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Join the Claremont PTA for an evening of fun at the Second Annual Silent Auction, Thelma Harris Gallery, 5940 College Avenue, on Saturday, February 21, from 6pm - 11pm. The theme is "$9.99 and some CHANGE". Tickets are $9.99 each. CHANGE happens with your support. Delicious appetizers and a no-host bar. For more information: www.claremontms.org or call 510-350-6419.

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