www.rockridge.org

THE Rockridge News

No Newsletter in August

VOL. 24 ■ NO. 7 ■ ISSUE NO. 258 ■ July 6, 2009 ■ CIRCULATION: 5,100 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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

2009 Rockridge Kitchen Tour: Sunday, September 20. Purchase tickets at www.rockridge.org

See What the Buzz Is About: Join the Rockridge Kitchen Tour, and the Margarido House Reception

by Jennifer Edmister

The 2009 Rockridge Kitchen Tour, the original home kitchen event in one of Oakland's most exciting neighborhoods, will soon be upon us. For the Standard Ticket presale price of $30, you will tour eight new kitchens and one full home. Each space is a stunning example of its kind, from impeccable bungalow kitchen restorations to grand, modern living spaces. Once again, our Rockridge homes boast designs and build quality that are bold, innovative, tasteful and, this year, smart.

The Margarido House, a nationally acclaimed collaborative project, is the first home in the United States to be both LEED Platinum certified and Greenpoint rated. The Margarido House, with its planted rooftop garden and in-floor hydronic heating, joins eight other kitchens on the September 20 tour.

For those who would enjoy a closer look, the Premium Ticket price of $60 includes an evening reception (5-8 p.m.) at the Margarido House. Sip a cocktail at sunset, admiring bay-wide views from the greenest home in Rockridge, and linger to sample cuisine from Oakland's newest hot

Kitchen Tour 2009, page 2



This richly appointed 2009 tour kitchen is also designed to be family-friendly.

Safeway Planning Major Changes for Rockridge Shopping Center

by Stuart Flashman

Safeway's commercial real estate division unveiled plans for a redesigned Rockridge Shopping Center, including an enlarged Safeway store, at two open houses held June 23 and 25. The Rockridge Shopping Center, at the corner of Broadway and Pleasant Valley Avenue, is the biggest shopping center in North Oakland, serving not only Rockridge but also Temescal, Broadway Terrace, Piedmont Avenue areas, and beyond. While Safeway isn't the owner of the property, it has been allowed to control its development.



Safeway wants to demolish and replace the Safeway and Long's stores and redevelop and add other buildings. D. KINKEAD

Rockridge Center: Safeway, page 12

Time for Current Permit Parking Stickers

Following up on concerns expressed by Rockridge residents about when 2009-10 Residential Permit Parking stickers must be displayed: RCPC has been informed by Mrs. Ira M. Christian, Supervisor, Parking Citations Assistance Center, that there is a 10-day grace period following the June 30 expiration date in which permit holders may affix the new stickers.

RCPC Board Seeks Merchant Member

Under RCPC's bylaws, one seat on the board of directors is set aside for appointment of a Rockridge merchant representative. Given the number of commercial controversies currently in play in Rockridge, the board would like to fill that seat.

If you are a Rockridge business owner and interested in contributing your time and ideas, please submit a short statement of interest, including your background and qualifications. Statements may be sent to the RCPC mailbox (5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, 94618) or e-mailed to chair@rockridge.org. The board will make the appointment at its August or September meeting.

RCPC Town Hall Meeting

AGENDA

July 2009

Thursday, July 16, 7:30 p.m.

Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College at Manila, Community Room (Upstairs)

■ **Joint Meeting: RCPC and Rockridge NCPC**

In July, RCPC and the Rockridge NCPC (Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council) hold a joint meeting to present and collaborate on crime and nuisance abatement concerns within the Rockridge area. The NCPC's areas of interest are in OPD police beats 12Y and 13X.

Kitchen Tour 2009

from page 1

spot, B Restaurant and Bar. The Margarido House Reception takes place on Thursday, September 17; tickets are limited.

To purchase presale Standard Tickets or Premium Tickets, visit www.rockridge.org or complete and return the coupon below. Premium Tickets, which include the greatly anticipated Margarido House Reception, are selling fast. Don't miss your chance to see what the buzz is about— for the full experience, purchase a Premium Ticket to join both the Margarido House Reception on September 17 and the Rockridge Kitchen Tour on September 20.

Docents Needed

If you'd rather join the fun behind the scenes, the Rockridge Kitchen Tour still needs docents. Docents, who are on hand to guide guests through each of our featured kitchens, receive a pre-tour of three kitchens and a complimentary ticket to visit the other six kitchens on the day of the event.

If you would like to be a docent, please call Nancy Sale at 655-4625.

Brochure Sponsorship

Many of our tour guests are looking for ideas and resources to assist them in future renovation projects. The Rockridge Kitchen Tour brochure is an excellent way to reach an interested and enthusiastic audience.

Limited advertising space remains, and ads must be reserved this month to meet our print deadlines. For ad information, contact Jo Ellis at joellis1@hotmail.com, or, after 12 noon, at 653-3210.

Advance Ticket Order Form

Yes! Save me a spot for the 2009 Rockridge Kitchen Tour
Sunday, September 20, 12:30–5:30 p.m.

Please send me the following tickets:

_____Standard Tickets @ $30 presale price..... = $ _____

_____Premium Tickets (*Includes 9/17 cocktail reception*) @ $60..... = $_____

TOTAL..... = $_____

Name: _____ Phone (_____)_____

Address: _____City: _____Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please mail this coupon, a self-addressed stamped envelope and your check or money order payable to: RCPC Kitchen Tour, 5245 College Avenue PMB 311, Oakland, 94618. Tickets will be mailed approximately two weeks before the event(s). ***Thank you!***

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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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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
☛ September 5, 2009 (No August issue)
☛ September deadline is August 20, 2009.
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.)*

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, July 22, 2009

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

■ **Rockridge Shopping Center rebuild (Broadway & Pleasant Valley)**

See article, page 1, for a discussion of Safeway's ambitious plans for redesigning this important North Oakland shopping center. The City's case planner is Darin Ranelletti (238-3663, dranelletti@oaklandnet.com).

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

Safeway submitted its completed application for this large project, including a subdivision map application to make the small shops into condominiums. The City is preparing an initial study of the project's potential environmental effects and the Planning Commission will hold a "scoping" hearing later in the summer for the project's environmental impact report. The City's case planner is Peterson Vollman (238-6167, pvollman@oaklandnet.com).

■ **Rockridge Montessori Expansion Project (5616 Broadway)**

Rockridge Montessori's original use permit application for the proposed expansion to over 200 students was deemed incomplete. The City is currently reviewing the applicant's recently submitted supplemental application materials. RCPC has raised concerns about the project's potential traffic impacts, especially the safety hazards that would be caused by extensive U-turns at the Broadway/Manila/Monroe intersection in front of the school. The City's case planner is Ulla Britt-Jonsson (238-3322, ujonsson@oaklandnet.com).

■ **College Preparatory School Facilities Master Plan (6100 Broadway)**

After discussions with both Murray Cohen, College Preparatory Head of School, and neighbors of the school, RCPC sent a letter to the City outlining its concerns with the school's proposed capital improvement master plan and suggestions about how they might be addressed. RCPC will continue to work with the school and its neighbors to reach a mutually acceptable plan. The City's case planner is Leigh McCullen (238-4977, lmccullen@oaklandnet.com).

■ **Citywide Zoning Update**

The City's very belated zoning update process is moving forward. The City is currently preparing detailed regulations for the CN-1 zone, a zoning category intended to replace both the C-31 zone that now applies to College Avenue and the C-27 zone that applies to Montclair Village. As of now, the new zone would incorporate all of the important provisions of C-31 and would continue to protect and promote ground floor retail on College.

The next meeting of the technical advisory groups is in August. Please check the RCPC Web site at rockridge.org or the city Web site at http://oaklandnet.com/zoningupdate for details.

Land Use Meeting Agendas

Contact Stu Flashman at 652-5373 or chair@rockridge.org for a copy of the current Land Use Committee meeting agenda.

■ **McGuire Real Estate Co. (5327 College Avenue)**

In 2005, RCPC lost a hard-fought battle against the installation of the Maison Nouveau real estate firm in a ground-floor space on College Avenue. In the process, Maison Nouveau offered two concessions to the Rockridge community: an art gallery and a home design library, both to be located in the front lobby of the building and accessible to the public during normal business hours. These concessions were incorporated in the conditional use permit granted by the City. Maison Nouveau recently moved out, and has been replaced by McGuire Real Estate Co. However, the use permit and its conditions remain applicable to the new business.

Following up on a recent complaint, RCPC discovered that the artwork had been replaced by travel posters and the "library" had been reduced to a single bookcase along one wall. RCPC notified the City of the apparent violation and has met with the building's owner, Heather Sittig.

A new art exhibit has now been installed and Ms. Sittig assured RCPC that she would comply with the use permit conditions, but is awaiting new furniture for the library. RCPC will continue to monitor compliance with the City's use permit conditions. City case planner: Darin Ranelletti (238-3663, dranelletti@oaklandnet.com.)

RCPC Seeks Rockridge Neighborhood Association Groups

The RCPC Communications Committee is assembling a list of neighbors' associations in Rockridge. As part of the rockridge.org Web site redesign, we will compile the list, make a map, and put it all on the site.

Connecting at the neighborhood level is a great way to know your neighbors, celebrate good times, and be prepared for emergencies. If you're in a neighbors' association, please send a contact person's name, group or individual e-mail address, and the streets of your association to: Rachel Hollowgrass, at rachelsh@earthlink.net.

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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.

Clarifying the question of the City Attorney's pay cut

Editor:

I noticed in the June 6 edition of the RN that you mentioned pay cuts for elected officials. The city attorney did accept pay cuts – much more than 5 percent. Russo accepted a cut of almost 15 percent (14.4%) to his compensation. That's on top of the previous salary reduction he took during the last budget crisis in 2003 (7.4%).

— Alex Katz
Communications Director
Oakland City Attorney's Office

Clarifying the question of the City Auditor's pay cut

Editor:

I saw the June Rockridge News regarding elected officials' salary cuts and wanted to help clarify some information.

In fact, City Auditor Ruby has taken a pay cut this year – the equivalent of 2.5%. You may not have been aware that when she took office she received a 17% salary reduction from her predecessor as well.

Auditor Ruby is very aware that the current financial crisis in the City will entail additional sacrifices and she's doing her part to help alleviate the burden.

— Erica Harrold
Executive Assistant
to the City Auditor

Big Market Clash

Editor:

In the June Rockridge News, architect Buttrick reportedly asserts that the "streetscape" of the proposed Safeway store is notable by its second-floor commercial presence. He's right: it's not typical, but the street-level plan for retail with anything over it is compliant with the intent of C-31 to promote street-level commerce. There are several older segments on College where above ground level is commercial, too.

The existing prevalence of ground floor restaurants is less in keeping with the intent than planned, but it is the reality of what's happened based on what's become of College. Call it a commercial 'gentrification'?

My primary concern with the large store plans relates to traffic. Given that Alcatraz is basically the effective end of College Avenue for the "Rockridge" area, even if it is in Berkeley at that point, Safeway replacing the dead space of that suburban-flavor parking lot with a lot-facing store could create an amenity for the neighborhood.

If we look at our neighborhood logically, BART should NOT be on College. Telegraph would have better handled the traffic. I could imagine high-density residential on the blocks around BART and perhaps office spaces for local and transient serving business (medical offices, etc), but I don't imagine RCPC reacting favorably to that.

In the 1970s, 51st between Broadway and Telegraph was widened and pretty much ignored thereafter. Had the widening been approached differently, that corridor might be better utilized. College would be far more difficult and expensive to widen, so we are likely 'stuck' with it. We could probably provide stricter traffic enforcement to improve flow, but do we want that?

— Robert Wiles


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RCPC Town Hall Meeting AGENDA July 2009

Join the Rockridge News Team

New Marshal Needed: Pick up and deliver bundles to three District Captains (routes 13, 14 & 16) in lower Rockridge first weekend of each month. Call Susan Montauk at 547-3855 or e-mail her at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer.

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FROG Park Corner

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



How is a park built?

In 1997, some Rockridge residents realized that local children had no nearby parks to visit. The group formed a sub-committee within RCPC called PARKS (People Advocating for Rockridge KidS), co-chaired by Theresa Nelson, and began planning for land, fundraising, and equipment.

Today, maintenance of much of FROGPark, the park the group created, is on the City's list of budget cuts. Volunteers will be needed to maintain the park in usable condition. Visit FROGPark's Web site at http://www.frogpark.org/ and RCPC's site at http://www.rockridge.org for ways to help and for volunteer news.

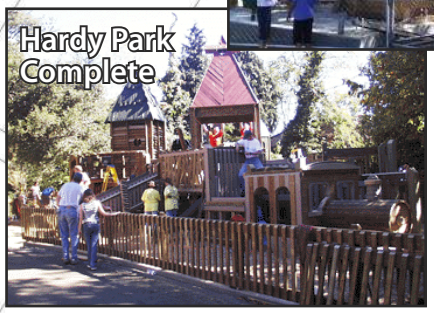


FROGPark co-founder Theresa Nelson embosses a frog design in the Greenbelt walkway.



Building Hardy Park's play structures began with laying out the site, progressed to half-built structures, below, and then finished, next below, as the park is today.





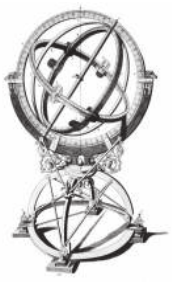




The completed Redondo Park with play structures and benches.



Graphic: Katy Taylor



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Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

Saucy Foods

In celebration of the 4th of July and in anticipation of the elaborate bar-b-queing being planned, The Rockridge News is pleased to present a past food feature from Barry Kaufman. "Saucy Foods" discusses condiments and sauces you may want to consider for any grilling you are planning.

Several years ago my daughter came home from high school, opened our full refrigerator and yelled, "There is nothing to eat! You have 10 mustards, umpteen Asian sauces and every condiment known to man, but nothing to eat." On another occasion, a poker player in our local weekly game went to get a beer and said, laughing, "You must not have young children; nothing but condiments."

Guilty as charged – my refrigerator door and pantry are filled with every conceivable condiment.

The word "condiment" originally meant pickled or preserved food. Chutneys are a good example. Earliest condiments were salt, pepper, seeds, jams, mustard and molasses. In the 19th century, Americans began to use table condiments, like ketchup and mayonnaise. Today, condiments include any food item used to complement or enhance our dining experience, including spices, bread or cracker spreads, table sauces, dips, and more recently, ethnic condiments.

A visit to Market Hall's Pasta Shop is a great place to see and sample the array of new fancy condiments. A few years ago, home chefs had a choice of three types of salt: table, kosher, and sea. The Pasta Shop and other gourmet food stores now carry over a dozen different types – pink, gray, black, red and smoked, to name a few. You can even buy a chunk of a salt rock and grate your own.

Most of us grew up with the standard sauce condiments: yellow mustard, ketchup and mayonnaise. Now, my refrigerator door holds 10 different types of mustard and a myriad of Asian and table condiments: soy sauce, hoisin sauce, wasabi, Vietnamese and Thai fish sauce, Chinese chili sauces, plum sauce, and Indian chutneys. Since the Civil War, Tabasco sauce, produced by the McIlhenny family on Avery Island, in Louisiana, was the mainstay hot sauce at home and at every restaurant in America. Now there are over 500 varieties of hot sauce available to the pepper sauce connoisseur. Check out More Hotta the Betta Web site, www.mohotta.com.

I love having a good stock of condiments to prepare a quick but distinctive meal. Vietnamese sweet chili sauce (look for it at Yasai Market) is ideal for sautéed shrimp. I sauté a pound of shelled shrimp in canola oil with some chopped garlic and minced ginger. Once the shrimp are pink, pour in the sweet chili sauce – just enough to coat the shrimp. Serve with rice and you have a perfect Asian light supper.

Achiote paste can be found in virtually every Mexican market. Sold in small red blocks, it is a combination of crushed achiote seed, vinegar, salt, garlic and spices. A small chunk of the block, diluted with either lime or orange juice, makes the perfect Yucatan marinade for fish or pork. Marinate for about 15 minutes. Grill the fish or pork. Serve with tortillas and black beans for a perfect Sunday supper.

The wide availability of commercially manufactured condiments has brought a revolution to the average American table. The downside of mass-produced commercial condiments, however, is standardization. This is particularly the case with ethnic condiments. As ethnic condiments become part of the culinary mainstream, they can lose their unique homemade flavor.

We all the like the convenience of twisting open a jar of Mexican salsa. But here is an easy recipe for a traditional Mexican Pico de Gallo that is better than any commercial version.

Pico de Gallo (Salsa Mexicana)

- 2 tablespoons diced white onion
- 8 Roma (Italian pear) tomatoes, diced
- 2 Serrano chilies, finely chopped (use jalapeño pepper for milder salsa)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro
- 1 small garlic clove, minced (optional)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 lime, freshly squeezed

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Chill in the refrigerator for a least an hour before serving. ***Note:*** You can also use this salsa as a marinade for shrimp civiche. Let shrimp marinate for an hour. Serve with chopped avocado.

Barry Kaufman is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy. Barry is available for private cooking classes. Email: kaufman42@earthlink.net.

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Details, page 4.

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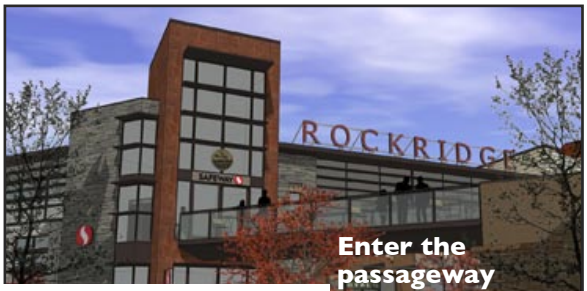
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Changes in Store? – A View of Safeway's Plans



A Safeway Walk to Where?

Picture yourself the size of the people shown in these drawings of Safeway's proposed new College Avenue store. What might you see and feel as you walk around in the plan? It could be like the scenario at left.

Walking south on College, you take a left into what could be an intriguing passageway leading from the Avenue, under the pedestrian bridge, past some quaint shops and on to a magnetic destination.

Instead, the trip appears to be a walk down a commercial arcade leading to Claremont Avenue with only the beckoning wall of the medical office building drawing you onward.

Exit the walkway, turn left up Claremont and walk past the imposing two-story outer wall of the food store and garage, avoiding the traffic moving in and out of the garage and the underground parking areas.

Walk to Alcatraz, then down to Old College Avenue for a soothing coffee at your favorite haunt. Relax. It's only your imagination....





GRAPHICS: LOWNEY ARCHITECTURE, FROM SAFEWAYONCOLLEGE.COM



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Ask A Cop

by PSO Officer Chew and PSO Officer Gerrans

The "Ask a Cop" column provides a question-and-answer format for Rockridge Problem Solving Officers (PSO) to answer residents' law enforcement and crime-related questions. PSOs Chew and Gerrans hope the column will improve communications and involve residents in the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) activities. Send your questions to editor@rockridge.org. Please include your name and address. Only your name will be printed.

Ask-A-Cop Questions, July 2009

- **Why did the Oakland Police Department remove the words "To Serve and Protect" from its fleet of police vehicles?** — *Johnnie Thompson*

Dear Mr. Thompson:

The word I received from the OPOA (Oakland Police Officer's Association, our union) regarding the slogan or phrase "To Serve And Protect" is that it has never been used on OPD vehicles. However, during my research, I did find out another interesting fact. In the '60s, our patrol cars were tan and white and had an oak tree symbol, representing the city of Oakland, displayed on the doors. (Many irreverently called the logo "the brain.")

- **Where should I call if I see a crime in progress? Where should I call to report a crime against me (burglary, mugging, car theft)?** — *S. Rainolds*

Dear S. Rainolds:

If you witness a crime in progress, you should call 911 from a land line in Oakland or **510/777-3211** from your cell phone to reach an Oakland 911 Dispatcher.

The 510/777-3211 number is the direct emergency line within the city. Dialing 911 from your cell phone will delay the response time, since your call will go first to a CHP emergency dispatcher located in Vallejo, who must then forward your call to the Oakland Police.

Call the non-emergency number, 510/777-3333, to file a police report on a crime against you that is hours old, with no suspect description, and where no medical help is needed.

If in doubt, dial 911 and let the dispatcher help sort the matter out.

— PSO Officer Chew

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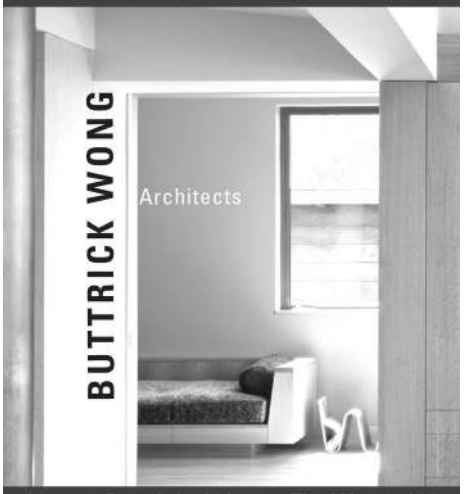
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Jerry Ratch, Rockridge Author

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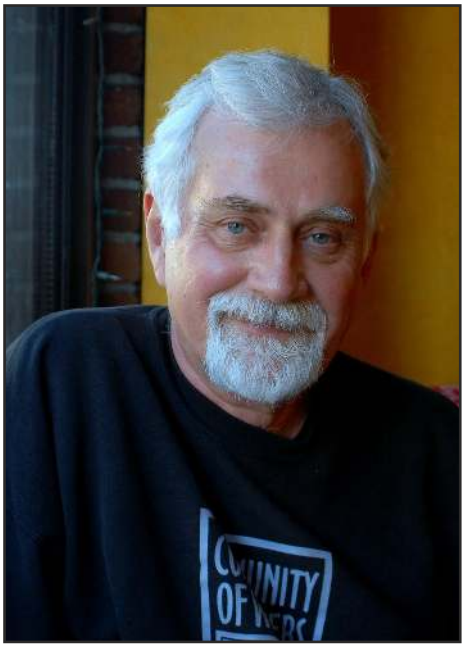
by Ortrun Niesar

Until the other day, I confess, I hadn't thought about the words "Rockridge" and "wild romance" appearing in the same sentence. To me, Rockridge has always had a kind of quiet, sleepy quality about it after the turbulent '70s. In fact, I have come to think of Rockridge rather like a giant incubator, safe and warm, beautiful but not terribly exciting, certainly not crazy, a perfect place to raise our children.

But then I met up with Rockridge poet and novelist Jerry Ratch over coffee at Spasso's, and he quickly changed my perception of things going on here.

Jerry, his chin graced by a handsome, silvery beard and his bushy eyebrows framing soft blue eyes, was already waiting for me, seated at the open window near the front of the café. Why at the window? "Because this is the best place for watching people unobserved," he commented.

Call it voyeurism, but it's something all writers need to do. I've done it too, not writing, but sketching strangers as they pass by anonymously. And then there is the synapse-stimulating bustle of College Avenue, elevated by the noise of BART and the freeway. This cacophony is not exactly welcome in our bedrooms; the double pane window business thrives in Rockridge. Nevertheless, it combines well with the lively hum of café life along this stretch of College. Artists feel inspired by this environment. And so they are here, creating our very own café culture. It isn't New York, Jerry concedes, but it's alive and well.



Rockridge author Jerry Ratch.

Photo: Ortrun Niesar

Jerry handed me two books that he has written, one a charming collection of haiku poems for homeowners (how appropriate for a poet whose day job is in real estate), the other his very first novel, published in 2001, entitled "Wild Dreams of Reality," an adult coming-of-age romp of love, obsession and personal liberation, set in a Rockridge and Berkeley of a generation ago.

I took the book home and read it right away. Reviewer Oakley Hall wrote, "Jerry Ratch's novel of low jinks in Berkeley goes off like a packet of Chinese firecrackers.…" It does. One's perception of reality is truly pushed to the edge, but not quite over it, as episodes of painful divorce and awakened love, heightened sensibility, insane jealousy, drug induced craziness, all-night flings in fast moving cars, and impenetrable summer fog swirl about in a rapidly flowing river of engaging poetic prose.

It all sounds quite alien against a backdrop of Rockridge as we know it today, but those who remember life here in the '70s will recognize the pervasive, romantic can-do spirit of personal freedom and vulnerability of those years that animates this story. Maybe they – we – even yearn for it a little. It was a unique time and Jerry, then teaching creative writing at UC Berkeley, clearly didn't have far to look beyond his own experiences for his material. It's a fun read.

Jerry grew up in Chicago and has an MFA degree in creative writing from UC Irvine. He had written 12 books of poetry, including his powerful sequence of poems entitled "Puppet X," before deciding to move on to fiction. His poetic training gives him a precise and compelling literary voice that is uniquely his. In the coming months, he will be publishing "A Body Divided: a memoir about growing up with Polio." And for enthusiasts of the culture of those times, "The Great Poetry Wars of the '70s" will soon be ready for publication as well. Jerry is also well-known on the local reading circuit.

Jerry is married to artist and painter Sherry Karver. Sherry is currently preparing for a solo exhibition at the Kim Foster Gallery in New York. In recent years, they have made their studio home in the old Women's Club building on Chabot Road and have become a permanent fixture in Rockridge.

To purchase a copy of "Wild Dreams of Reality," contact jerry@jerryratch.com. Published in 2001, the novel might be hard to find in bookstores. Jerry will be glad to supply you from the little stash he still has.

Visit Jerry's Web site at http://www.jerryratch.com/index.htm for more information about him and his work.

Ortrun Niesar can be reached at oniesar@sbcglobal.net

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College Avenue: Good Things Are Happening!

RDA Activities in Rockridge

Chris Jackson, left, RDA administrative staff worker, and College Avenue insurance agent Susan Bernosky, worked with a nearby business and neighbors during Earth Day cleanup to paint a delapidated fence marring the entry to Rockridge's shopping district. Jackson then made a photograph into a welcoming poster and mounted it on the fence. PHOTO: DON KINKEAD

by Louise Rothman-Riemer, DHR Investment Counsel Ltd

RDA, the Rockridge District Association, is an organization of business owners in Rockridge. Members work at volunteer improvement projects to help keep College Avenue a vibrant and attractive shopping area. Following are some recent projects and achievements of the association.

Mural at College at Broadway

Please take note of our new "Shop Rockridge" mural located adjacent to the walkway and fence at College and Broadway. This was an Earth Day project created by many hands. In particular, a big thanks to Sabuy Sabuy Thai Cuisine restaurant, the NCPC (Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council), the RDA (Rockridge District Association), neighbors from Hemphill Court and Susan Bernosky from Allstate Insurance. This mural helps to identify our district while abating blight in the neighborhood.

Street Improvements

Chris Jackson, the RDA's administrative staffer, has been working with the city of Oakland to bring additional improvements to the street. Among the results of his efforts are six new trash containers, freshly painted curb zoning markers, removal of the old parking meter poles, sidewalk power washing and removal of graffiti sites.

Sidewalk Benches Return

The RDA has also been working closely with the City to improve the sidewalks around tree wells. As a result, the district's benches, which were removed during construction, will be returned to the street. When returned, they will be repositioned so that they do not interfere with access to parked cars.

College Avenue Area Security

The RDA has also been working closely with the police department and the merchants to stay on top of any security issues. In particular, the group has sponsored a merchant watch program, which has increased merchant awareness of security breaches on the street.

Utilizing City Programs

Additionally, the RDA has co-sponsored a workshop for merchants to acquaint them with the district's Enterprise Zone benefits such as tax and hiring credits. In June, the RDA held a bag lunch meeting for merchants on how to take advantage of façade improvement programs offered by the City.

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Photo: Don Kinkead

The Neighborhood Merchant

by Theresa Nelson

Men, Get Dressed at Dapper

A rare breed on College Avenue, Dapper is devoted entirely to men's clothing and accessories. Located a half-block from the Rockridge Library, this sleek store opened in Rockridge in late 2007, moving here from Emeryville's Bay Street shopping mall.

Dapper offers men comfortable clothing that can be worn in a variety of situations; their menswear is stylish but not trendy, classics with a little something extra for men of various ages. Many of the items Dapper carries are from small businesses, are made of organic materials, and are often manufactured in the U.S. In contrast to the huge and sometimes overwhelming selection at department stores, manager Marcus Leung notes that "At Dapper, we edit the options, so you have quality choices with personality."

A good example of this approach is the standard pairing of jeans and a T-shirt. Marcus says, "Dressing casual does not have to mean dressing sloppy… T-shirts and jeans that really fit can be comfortable as well as stylish." The Good Society jeans they carry are hand sewn in the US, made of organic cotton under fair trade contracts, dyed with natural indigo… and under $100. The Jamie Marx Company T-shirts feature clever graphics on soft cotton. Each year the company contributes a portion of its proceeds to charities, this year to an organization that supports after-school art and athletics programs for children.



Dapper Men's Store manager Marcus Leung displays some of the men's shirts the store offers.

Photo: Christina Ahlstrand

Men's shirts are available in a wide variety of styles. Artificial Flavor, a small, California-based firm, offers shirt jackets in olive green and black, and Mexican-style guayabara shirts, all made of soft textiles that will feel as good as they look. Shirts from 7 Diamonds (another California manufacturer) come in various black and white patterns. Button-downs, polos in soft cottons, and short-sleeved shirts for summer easily mix with the pants and jackets.

Because it can be cool in the East Bay in the evenings, Dapper carries seasonal coats as well. The Orthodox line offers classic styles updated with new fabrics, such as a brushed cotton coat that feels like suede. Their coat styles are named after famous writers: the black "Kierkegaard" car coat, the "Lawrence" cardigan, and others named for Chaucer, Elliot, and Blake.

Accessories include leather goods from Tanner in Portland, whose belts, briefcases and wallets are made from leather from one of the few remaining U.S. tanneries. Socks from Marcoliani of Italy are available in soft pima cotton or merino wool. Artificial Flavor briefs and boxers are available in a variety of colors and cuts. Extra-thin ties from Revl in silks and knits feature unusual patterns such as fishhooks or harpoons. Paul Frank sunglasses and stylish watches complement the French Schmoor shoes and boots. And the classic PF Flyers many men remember from childhood are now available for adults in black, white, tan, and patent leathers, with removable ergonomic insoles, and the famous little green logo.

"As a small business, we can be really responsive to what men are asking for," said Marcus. "When customers asked for more suits, we were able to quickly respond with styles like the modern yet classic one-button Kostym jacket with peaked lapels in a regular fit with darts, at less than $300 for the jacket and pants."

Marcus noted that people who shop in Rockridge tell him that they do so because they really want to support local businesses, knowing that it helps build the neighborhood. So stop in to Dapper for quality, stylish men's clothing – right here in the neighborhood.





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Marcus Leung, manager
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6/5/2009	2/1	418 Avon Street	$575,000	35	$575,000	$570,000
6/15/2009	2/1	331 Clifton Street	$739,000	10	$739,000	$742,500
6/12/2009	3/2	395 60th Street	$789,000	26	$789,000	$750,000
6/5/2009	3/1.5	236 Florence Avenue	$799,000	14	$799,000	$827,000
5/28/2009	3/3	5925 Ocean View Drive	$930,000	27	$930,000	$880,000
6/18/2009	4/2.5	85 Norman Lane	$1,150,000	40	$1,098,000	$1,082,000
6/18/2009	4/4	5932 Buena Vista Avenue	$1,875,000	30	$1,795,000	$1,500,000

• There is currently 1.8 month's worth of inventory in Rockridge • The average market time has increased by nearly 41% since a year ago this time • The average List to Sell price has greatly decreased, as it was 106% a year ago, and is now 94%. • 75% of last month's sales Sold for below the asking price.

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Rockridge Center Proposal: Safeway

from page 1

The current shopping center, dating back to the 1960s, includes about 185,500 sq. ft. of space, including Safeway, a Long's Drugs, and a Chase bank (formerly Washington Mutual Bank). Safeway's proposed rebuild would add about another 110,000 sq. ft. of commercial space to the complex, putting a second story on most of the site's single-story buildings and adding buildings along the Pleasant Valley frontage.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the proposal is to move Safeway onto the site now occupied by Long's Drugs. According to Safeway, CVS, the new owner of Long's, isn't interested in maintaining the current 87,000 sq. ft. store, and will, instead, move into a much smaller (approximately 15,000 sq. ft.) store. Once the new Safeway is finished, the current store would be torn down and replaced by a two-story structure, including several major retail tenants and some second-story office space.

The community's reaction at the June 23 open house was decidedly mixed. While many welcomed the expansion of the retail space, some complained that the proposal was still too auto-oriented and not pedestrian or bicycle-friendly. Several members of the group ULTRA (Urbanists for a Livable Temescal Rockridge Area) felt that the proposal was too suburban and needed to be far denser. They wanted to see four, and perhaps even eight-story buildings on the site, including residential units in the upper stories. (Safeway said that was impossible and explained that the site's long-term master lease did not allow residential use.)

On the other hand, a resident in the condominiums that face the shopping center on the other side of Pleasant Valley Avenue was appalled at the prospect of looking across at a row of four-story buildings. Others commented on the need for a better connection to the community through the Broadway frontage, and referenced a site study prepared by the City several years earlier that tied the area to additional development on the west side of Broadway.

Regardless of what design is chosen, a major concern will certainly be traffic. The Broadway/51st Street/Pleasant Valley intersection already is subject to major delays during peak commute hours. Safeway proposes to add turn lanes on both Broadway and Pleasant Valley, but it seems likely that adding another 110,000 sq. ft. of space will make an already-congested section of Broadway considerably worse.

From the City's posted project notice:

"The project would contain a total of approximately 304,000 square feet of commercial space and 1,000 parking spaces. Also proposed are modifications to adjacent streets including additional vehicle travel lanes and/or turn lanes."

There will be a public hearing before the Oakland Planning Commission, tentatively scheduled for July 15, to consider the scope of environmental studies for the project. This is an opportunity for direct public comment on the project. Comments are entered into the record for consideration and response in the final report.

As July 15 approaches, please be sure to check RCPC's Web site at www.rockridge.org for more details.

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At the June RCPC Town Hall Meeting

(Solar) Power to the People in Rockridge

by Don Kinkead

Getting off the Grid has been the rallying cry and dream of many a back-to-the-land modern day pioneer. A compelling concept, but, until recently, its realization could often mean living in social isolation in the far corner of a National Forest, recreating urban necessities, such as electricity, through super-technical generating systems.

Nowadays, it is possible to realize the dream while maintaining a vibrant urban lifestyle. The ins and outs of disconnecting oneself from the confining grasp of PG&E's network of electric wires and gas pipes – the Grid – were discussed by two solar power company representatives at the June RCPC Town Hall meeting.

Sales Manager Eric Nyman of the aptly named Sun Light & Power company, and Project Manager Evan Raymond of Renewable Artistry Solar, said modern solar-driven generating systems are designed more efficiently, last longer, and require less maintenance than earlier designs. Installing the systems is also easier, allowing homeowners to keep system costs down while saving on power costs.



South- and west-facing solar panels installed on a Rockridge Bungalow home. Photo: Don Kinkead

Nyman and Raymond also said that governments – local, state and federal – offer tax breaks and installation subsidies to encourage wider use of renewable energy sources.

Solar power systems deliver two types of service, Nyman and Raymond said. The first, photovoltaic, produces electricity for appliances, lighting, electric heaters and other home-oriented electricity-based uses. The second, solar thermal, heats water for bathing, laundry and other cleaning, storing it until use in a standard hot water tank.

External factors, of course, affect the efficiency of solar power systems. Since most installations are placed on the roof, its orientation to the sun determines the amount of sunlight the solar panels receive. Also, trees, nearby tall buildings and other shading sources influence the system's efficiency. Each potential location is analyzed by solar power installers to determine the potential benefit available to specific sites, according to the presenters.

Once installed, a system can provide significant savings over utility company costs. The expected system life of 25 to 30 years can provide a satisfyingly long time off the grid.

Web site addresses: Sun Light & Power is at http://www.sunlightandpower.com/, or phone 510/845-2997. Renewable Artistry Solar is at http://renewableartistry.com/, or phone 415/533-7534. Both companies are located in Berkeley.

1-BOG: Another Solar Power Resource

Another important local solar power resource is One Block Off the Grid. 1-BOG organizes large groups of people who want to install solar energy systems and then helps arrange group discounts for the purchase and installation of the systems. The program is available to homeowners and residential property owners.

Learn more at http://1bog.org/, or phone 650/823-1670.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

At the Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017. **NOTE: If you are ages 11 to 16 and are interested in being a summer volunteer at the library, see Erica or Gay or call 597-5057.**

FOR CHILDREN:

- **Toddler Story Time:** Every Saturday, 10:30am.
- **Pre-School Story Time**: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 10:30am. **(No Story Time on 9/2)**
- **Baby and Toddler Story Time**: 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 10:30am, **upstairs Community Room.**
- **Pajama Story Time:** 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7pm, (**see events below**).

SUMMER READING SPECIAL EVENTS:

Summer Reading: through 8/8. Sign up, read for 8 hrs. over the summer and get prizes. All ages welcome to read or be read aloud to.

- **Making Jewelry** with **Chelsea Robinson**: Tues., 7/7, 7pm.
- **Craft Workshop Making Creatures:** Thur., 7/16, 3pm.
- **Bharatanatyam Dance Arts of India:** Tues., 7/21, 7pm.
- **The Bubble Lady:** Tues., 8/4, 7pm.
- **Craft Workshop Making Puppets:** Thurs., 8/6, 3pm.
- **East Bay Depot:** Tues., 8/18, 7pm.

FOR TEENS:

- **Call for Book Buddy Volunteers!** Teens will read aloud to younger kids, or listen while new readers practice reading aloud themselves. Every Weds until Aug. 5, from 2-4pm. Contact Susy, 597-5017 to volunteer.
- **Rockridge Ninjas (Anime Club): Teens 13 and up,** watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation) with other teens. Second Tuesday each month, 5 to 6:30pm, upstairs meeting room.
- **Get Out! Teen Summer Passport Program: For teens 12 to 18. Runs through Aug. 15**. Pick up your Teen Summer Passport at the Library and get your passport stamped as you explore recommended Bay Area Hot Spots. You can also earn stamps by volunteering, doing book reviews, attending library programs, or personalizing your passport with a photo or drawing. **Teens can win prizes such as an iPod Nano, a laptop computer, and a Flip camera.**

FOR ADULTS–Library sponsored events:

- **Writers' Support/Critique Group:** ALL writers welcome. Bring 14 copies of up to 5 double-spaced pages of any prose for on-site reading/discussion. Meets 3rd Saturday each month, 1-5pm. Sponsored by the California Writers Club, Berkeley branch (www.berkeleywritersclub.org.) Info: 420-8775 or Writefox@aol.com.
- **Lawyers in the Library:** Free legal advice. First Tuesday each month from 6 to 8pm. Advance sign-up starts 5pm. More info: 597-5017.
- **A Conversation With Your Aging Parents:** Tips and resources to help you assist aging family members. Presented by the Rockridge Branch Library and Eldercare Services, a Bay Area professional geriatric care agency. Tues., 8/11, 7–8pm.
- **Writing Workshop:** Writing for Spiritual Growth and Transformation with **Susanne West**. Sat., 8/29, 2–4 pm.

OTHER LIBRARY MEETINGS:

- Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC): Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas can voice their concerns about crime and public safety. **NOTE: July only. Joint meeting with RCPC on July 16, 7:30pm, (see p.1). Regular schedule in Aug.**; 4th Thursday each month, 7- 8:30pm, upstairs meeting room. E-mail: Info@rockridgencpc.com or infofordenise@yahoo.com.
- **Peace Corps Information Night:** Learn about volunteering overseas in education, health, business, environment and more. **No upper age limit.** Mondays, 7/20 and 8/17, 6:30 to 7:30pm. Info: Heather Driscoll, 452-8444, sfevents@peacecorps.gov or www.peacecorps.gov.

ART EXHIBITS: Call to confirm dates.

Gallery:

- July: **Darrill Tighe**; Abstract watercolors.
- August: **Irving Wiltshire**; Photography of the Rockridge Area.
- September: **Oparna Ewing**; Quilts by **Oakland Quilt Group**.

Lobby Display Case:

- July: **David Peniston**; Assemblage of Old Books.
- August: **John Baldwin**; Hand Puppets.
- September: Quilts by **Oakland Quilt Group**.

LIBRARY HOURS: Note: Library schedule may change; Call after July 1 to confirm hours.
Mon. and Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.
Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 10am to 5:30pm.
Fri., 12 to 5:30pm. **Closed Sundays.**
Also closed: Mon., 9/7 and Wed., 9/9.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Thurs., 7/9, 6pm. **The Bay Area Writing Project's Young Writers' Camp** will read their work.
- Sun., 7/12, 3pm. **Dorianne Laux, Joseph Millar** and **Michelle Bitting** read their poetry.
- Mon., 7/13, 7pm. **Amnesty International Meeting**: All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Tues., 7/14, 7pm. **Dean Kuipers:** *Operation Bite Back: Rod Coronado's War to Save American Wilderness*.
- Wed., 7/29, 7pm. Local attorneys **Janelle Orsi** and **Emily Doskow**: *The Sharing Solution: Save Money, Simplify Your Life, and Build Community*.
- Sun., 8/2, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Lucille Lang Day** and **Roz Spafford**.

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.

Music by Jesse Strickman

Local Rockridge guitarist and songwriter **Jesse Strickman** will perform at The Art and Soul Festival Oakland, Sat., Aug. 15, 3:45pm, on the Singer/Songwriter stage in front of City Hall. He will also perform with his band, **Dear Indugu**, at the ND-Fest: New Music Dance and Art Party on Saturday, Aug. 8, 8pm at El Rincon, 2700 16th St., S.F. More info at www.myspace.com/DearIndugu.

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 9pm. **New rehearsal venue:** Bishop O'Dowd HS, 9500 Stearns Ave. A benefit concert in the fall supports local K-12 music programs. Info: Carola Ingram, 547-1191 or carolaingram@mac.com.

12th Annual Bay to Barkers Dog Walk and Festival

One mile dog walk, games contests, prizes and spa time for humans and canines. Sun., Aug.2nd, 10am to 1pm. Registration begins at 8:30am ($30) or in advance for $25 per dog at www.berkeleyhumane.org. North parking lot of Golden Gate Fields, Albany. Proceeds benefit homeless dogs and cats at the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society. 845-7735, ext 13 or cshelby@berkeleyhumane.org.

Out of the Ashes; a Project Peace Film Festival to Benefit Oakland Elizabeth House

Featuring films by Bay Area women filmmakers. Friday, July 31. Doors open 7pm; films and panel discussion 7:30–10:30pm. Gaia Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. Tickets: $10 (includes one drink and snacks). Info and reserve tickets: www.projectpeaceeastbay.org.

North Oakland Senior Center

Program Highlights: Computer classes; health Insurance counseling and advocacy program; exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; tap and jazz dance lessons; Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Groups.

- **Lavender Seniors Book Club:** 1st Fri. each month; **free**.
- **Farmers' Market:** every Wed., 10am–2pm.
- **Flea Market:** Sat., Aug. 8, 8am–4pm. Vendor space $10 (cash only).
- Call 597-5085 for details on community event **"August Night Out"** on Aug. 4 at 6:30pm.

Hours: Mon.–Fri., 8:45am to 4:45pm. 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Subscribe to "The North Oakland Senior Times," for a full schedule of classes/events and monthly lunch menu ($2.25 to $4). Volunteer: 597-5085.

American Red Cross

- **Mobile Blood Drives:** Call 800-GIVE-LIFE (800/448-3543) or go to HelpSaveALife.org to find a location near you. **In July, donors will be entered weekly in drawings for a $100 gas card** (not available at school blood drives).
- **Volunteer Orientations:** Tour the Oakland Blood Center. Learn to assist blood donors, deliver blood, help with special projects. Wed., 7/15 and 7/22 from 6pm–8pm. 6230 Claremont Avenue (across from College Ave. Safeway). Learn more or sign up: Anne at 594-5165 or BlackstoneA@usa.redcross.org.

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