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THE Rockridge News

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

RCPC Town Hall Meeting

☛ Agenda

7:30 p.m., Thursday
January 21, 2010

■ **RCPC Reports to the Community... and gets feedback from community members.**

■ The January Town Hall Meeting is traditionally the occasion when RCPC, FROG Park, and Friends of the Rockridge Library report to the Rockridge community on what we've all been doing over the past year. In return, it's also an opportunity for you, the membership, to let us know how you think we're doing and things you think we ought to be working on. Your feedback is both important and needed.



A Rockridge Christmas is sidewalks crowded with shoppers, weather ranging from bitter cold to balmy and rainy, homes and streets decorated with snowmen and Santas, colored balls hung high in trees, and lights everywhere. Christmas is wind-blown leaves on the sidewalk, a gaunt tree silhouetted against a house, and the promise of a New Year just around the corner.

Rockridge photographer Lydia Gans recently captured views of the local season. Her photos are at left and on page 9.

Rockridge Library Hit by City Budget Cuts in Staff, Hours

You can help: Donate today to Friends of the Rockridge Library

The Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) needs your support more than ever this coming year. In 2009, our community used our library even more heavily than usual, and the Friends again provided much-needed support.

FORL has provided funds for ongoing replenishment of the children's book collection; for continued long-term subscriptions to the daily *New York Times*, *Art in America*, *Value Line*, *In These Times*, and approximately a dozen other high-demand periodicals, magazines, and newspapers; for a summer intern from Oakland Tech High School who assists in managing the summer children's reading program; and for the provision of gardening oversight and ongoing maintenance of the beautiful and much-used library furniture.

We very much hope that you will consider becoming a member of FORL by sending your tax-deductible donation accompanied by the membership form available on page 3.

City Revisits Permit Parking Costs, Raises Fees on Short Notice

by Jon Gabel, boardmember, RCPC

In October, 2008, when the city of Oakland considered raising Residential Permit Parking (RPP) fees, it circulated an analysis of that program's cost, held meetings with the community, and advertised the City Council meeting at which the issue was to be decided.

When residents balked at the proposed increase to $60 for new registration and $50 for renewals, annual renewal fees were raised from $15 to $20, new registration was set at $35, and a performance audit of the RPP program was mandated.

In December, 2009 permit parking program costs again came under consideration.

This time, the City made no apparent outreach and many residents reported receiving notice only three days prior to the December 8 Council meeting that RPP fees would be on the agenda. The Council voted to adopt an increased renewal fee of $35. Several councilmembers stated this was necessary to cover the costs of the program. A final vote on this increase was to take place January 5.

To date, only an interim performance audit report is available (http://www.oaklandcityauditor.com/images/oakland/auditreports/rpp_interim_report.pdf). In that report, enforcement costs and revenues from citations are not included. The actual cost of the RPP program is unknown, according to the interim report, since program costs involve both direct and ancillary charges involving overlapping agencies. Furthermore, the report estimates that it takes 50 minutes to process every permit each year.

At the December council meeting, City staff stated that some improvements are being made to the RPP program, but no details have been made available in written form.



FROG Park Celebrates Art Project







An enthusiastic crowd dedicated the latest Rockridge public art project "Views of the Greenbelt" by artist Mark Brest van Kempen on a rainy day in Rockridge.

Installed between Hardy and Redondo Parks along the Greenbelt (see accompanying map, page 11), the strategically placed sculptures of native flora and fauna, sculptural viewing devices and a tactile podium centrally located pay homage to Temescal Creek history and ecology.

The project was commissioned by the city of Oakland's Public Art Project, under the supervision of Kristen Zaremba. A selection jury composed of community members, artists, and art professionals recommended Oakland artist Mark Brest van Kempen. Project funding came from several sources including Measure DD, the Oakland Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks, the Oakland Public Art Program, the Oakland ADA Programs Division, and FROG.

This project would not have been possible without the assistance of many City staff, community representatives, and project collaborators. FROG acknowledges:

Dedication speakers: city of Oakland's Public Art Program representative Kristen Zaremba, Councilmember Brunner staff member Nila Kim, Oakland Public Art Advisory Committee member Jennifer Easton, FROG past Chair Jennifer Cooper, and artist Mark Brest van Kempen.

Other contributors: Markley Bavinger and Joel Peter, Measure DD Program; Eric Cabunoc; Christine Calabrese, ADA Coordinator; Bruce Douglas, Friends of Temescal Creek; Ian Duffy; Ron Holthuysen, Scientific Art Studio; Claire Isaacs-Warhaftig, ex-Public Art Advisory Committee; Hiroko Kurihara; Steve Gillman; Carroll Moore; Carol McClellan; Theresa Nelson; Jennifer Cooper; and David Ryan, Ryan and sons Metal works, FROG steering committee

➧ FROG Park Art, page 11

① Kristen Zaremba welcomes residents to the dedication ceremony.
② Art lovers listen intently to the speakers.
③ Artist Mark Brest van Kempen addressing the crowd.
④ Rockridge-Temescal neighbors gathered around the accessible platform to hear speaker Kristen Zaremba.

Photos: FROG Committee

January FROG Steering Committee Meeting

You can get involved with improving and maintaining our neighborhood's park.

Join us Thursday, January 14, 7 p.m., at the Rockridge Branch Library upstairs meeting room — bring your friends and family — to learn where help is needed. Not able to attend? E-mail info@frogpark.org and tell us what you're interested in. A FROG committee member will get back to you right away.

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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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- Are there community issues you'd like to see covered in ***The Rockridge News***?
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- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

Contact us at one of the following:
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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
☛ **February 6, 2010**
☛ **February deadline is January 21, 2010.**
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

NOTE: Fall Land Use Committee meeting dates are revised, due to new Rockridge library schedules: Next meeting: January 27 (4th Wed) Meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

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.

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

■ **Citywide Zoning Update**

The updating of Oakland's zoning ordinance continues to roll forward. The city Web site (http://oaklandnet.com/zoningupdate) has posted the current draft zoning maps, including maps showing proposed commercial and residential zoning designations and the proposed height limits for different parts of the city.

For Rockridge itself, little change is proposed. The only places where significant changes are being considered are along Broadway for one block north of 51st Street and along Telegraph Avenue north of Highway 24 to the Berkeley border. In both of these areas, somewhat taller and denser development is contemplated. The commercial corridor technical advisory group (TAG) will have its next meeting in late January/early February to review staff responses to community input. Check the city Web site for details. TAG meetings are open to the public. A final round of citywide community meetings is planned for early spring, before a final zoning proposal is brought to the planning commission and city council for enactment.

■ **The Land Use Year in Review**

■ **The Safeway Projects**

So, now that 2009 is history, what can we look back on as significant events here in Rockridge? One word has dominated the local discussion – Safeway. With two stores bracketing Rockridge, Safeway has always had an oversized presence here. Significant expansion is proposed for both stores, and both sets of expansion plans have drawn strong reactions. Interestingly, while the community response has been strong and unusually unified, it has pushed in opposite directions at the two Safeway sites.

At its College/Claremont store, Safeway has proposed an expansion from 22,500 sq. ft. to a 50,000 sq. ft. second-floor store, plus another 11,000 sq. ft. of ground-floor small shop retail along College and a 174-space parking garage. The community response has been alarm, especially over the expected traffic impacts along already-congested College Avenue and spillover cut-through traffic on the neighboring residential streets. RCPC and other community groups have also expressed strong concern about the project's inconsistency with the general plan's "preserve and enhance" designation for the area, as well as the project's inconsistency with the pedestrian-oriented emphasis of the area's C-31 zonings.

For its Rockridge Shopping Center store, currently already 50,000 sq. ft in size, Safeway has proposed a somewhat more modest expansion to 65,000 sq.ft., coupled to an overall 110,000 sq.ft. expansion of the shopping center. The renovated shopping center would go from one to two stories in height, but would otherwise retain much of its current configuration. Here, the unified community response was that Safeway's proposal was an inefficient and ineffective use of this large and centrally located site. There was also extensive criticism of the suburban auto-oriented focus of Safeway's proposal. RCPC has suggested that the site deserves a more urban and transit-oriented development proposal. The City is contracting with outside planning consultants to prepare environmental impact reports for both of these large and important projects.

Land Use in Review, page 10

Support the Rockridge Branch Library With Your 2010 Tax-Deductible Donation.

✂ Friends of the Rockridge Library ✂

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Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) is a nonprofit neighborhood committee which works to enhance the Rockridge Branch Library by providing books, magazines, equipment, furnishings, and amenities not covered by the City of Oakland Library budget.

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Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) is a committee of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC), a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation.

✂ Friends of the Rockridge Library 5245 College Avenue, #335, Oakland CA 94618 ✂

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- ❒ $15 Senior/Student
- ❒ Returning member
- ❒ Other $_____
- ❒ New Member

*Members at this level & above will receive a certificate for a beautiful FORL heavy canvas tote bag redeemable at the check-out desk of the library.

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.

AC Transit Proposes to split Route 51 at Rockridge BART

Editor:

AC transit is proposing to cut route 51, which goes down College, into two routes. The terminus will be Rockridge BART. This will cause disruption in rides for many people. It will also mean that AC transit buses will be maneuvering on the side streets in the neighborhood to get into position to return down College. The new lines will be the 3 and 4. Some of the buses will be turning every 10-15 minutes times two lines.

I am a bus rider and oppose the cut into two lines at BART. As a pedestrian, I do not want to compete with buses. Cars are enough.

I haven't seen anything in The Rockridge News about this change that will affect busriders and the neighborhood around the BART alike.

— Kathleen Martin

Editor's Reply:

The change to AC Transit Line 51 is one among many system-wide service adjustments studied, planned and implemented by the transit agency. Line 51, for example, was the subject of a service and reliability report completed in December 2008 that details the lines' operating and reliability characteristics. (The report is on-line at http://www.actransit.org/pdf/planning_focus/planning_focus_228.pdf?PHPSESSID=1c939660de8429dd50573ed4d407591c.)

The Rockridge News reported on the proposal to split the line in the May 2009 issue.

According to Jim Gleich of AC Transit, the agency's board of directors has voted to implement the line split.

Safeway Brings Wider Selection, New Shops to College Avenue

Editor:

I'd like to register my support for the Safeway remodeling.

Wouldn't anyone prefer a better market with more options and greater selection? Wouldn't anyone welcome new shops on the site where there's been a pretty ugly gas station for years?

— Joe Garrett


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On a Roll with High Expectations: The Rockridge News Sits Down with the Principal of Oakland Technical High School

by Bill Kaufner, chair, RCPC Education Committee

You might compare a modern-day high school principal to the CEO of a small corporation. Certainly, Sheilagh Andujar, in her 6th year as principal of Oakland Technical High School, fits the bill. Her mission is to marshal a workforce of more than 125 employees to create a program that will result in educational excellence for 1700 students each semester. That said, Oakland Tech has made great strides towards fulfilling that goal under the leadership of Ms. Andujar, her administrative team, and her seasoned teaching staff.

Tech's principal served her apprenticeship in San Leandro and Alameda, working in special education, counseling, and administration before coming to Oakland. A UC Berkeley graduate, she has expanded the highly successful Academies Program at Tech and has helped make Tech a school of choice for students in the City of Oakland.

Following are excerpts from an interview with Ms. Andujar, focusing on her vision for the continuing renaissance taking place at Oakland Tech:



Sheilagh Andujar, Principal, Oakland Technical High School.

PHOTO: BILL KAUFNER

Rockridge News: What are the latest developments taking place at Tech?

Sheilagh Andujar: We received our Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation for six years, which is the maximum granted. This year, we opened our new College and Careers Center with help from our UC partners and our counseling staff. We produced a College Fair for all students which had representatives from 40 colleges in attendance. Our Health Academy students created a Health Fair keyed to adolescent issues. Our After-School and Tutorial Program is in full swing and fully funded.

Lastly, our Parent Student Teacher organization (PSTA) is flourishing as parents who were active in elementary/middle school groups have continued to put their energy into improving Oakland Tech, including staffing our Parent Resource Center. I might add that by parent request, AC Transit has expanded Bus Route 662 to originate in Montclair and travel to Tech.

RN: Have there been any changes to the Academies Program?

SA: A new Green Academy has opened focusing on energy conservation, green building and environmental careers. We are very excited to see this Academy join our established Academies: Health Sciences; BioTechnology; Engineering; Computer. Let me explain that we are part of the Options Program of Oakland Schools. All 8th grade students may select three choices for Academy Programs in our city high schools. A lottery is held and students who enter Tech take a regular 9th grade course of study with smaller learning communities in cohorts of ninety students and three teachers. In the spring semester, 9th graders make a final choice and enter the Academy program in 10th grade. We offer a full academic program to students who choose not to join an Academy. While not part of the Academies, our Paideia Program and our Performing Arts Program are wonderful options for Tech students. My philosophy is students must have access to many options and all doors to learning should be open.

RN: Speaking of academics, what classes are offered that are relatively new to Tech?

SA: We now offer four foreign languages including Mandarin 1, 2, and 3, and Italian 1 and 2. In mathematics we have Statistics Advanced Placement and Calculus AP. Our Computer Academy now has a networking course. We offer Creative Writing in our English Department. In Physical Education we have an Ice Sports class that meets at the Sharks Oakland Ice Rink. Established courses include Computer-Assisted Design (CAD)-3D drawing and California History.

RN: On the student activities side are there any new clubs or teams?

SA: We just started an Ice Hockey Club/Team coached by one of the teachers who is from Boston. We have a Lacrosse team that has started to compete on a club basis. We also have a group that participates in a Jack London rowing club on the Oakland Estuary. A group of our students are part of the Students Run Oakland Club and will compete in the Los Angeles Marathon. Of course, we have all the traditional sports teams competing in the Oakland Athletic League.

RN: What should parents expect when they send their children to Oakland Tech?

SA: They will be sending their children to the most diverse high school in Oakland where their children will receive a solid educational foundation. Our staff is committed to listen and respond to the needs of all students. We are a dynamic group with the ability to adjust and change. Tech has been here since 1915 and we have had generations of families attend. Our alumni are coming back and enriching the school. We have three assistant principals, four counselors, numerous links to local colleges, and graduates in recent years who have gone on to Cal, Stanford, M.I.T., and Harvard. We have school tours each Fall and student-to-student shadowing in the spring.

RN: How do you manage to stay on top of all that goes on at Tech?

SA: Part of the fun of my job is putting all the pieces of a big puzzle together. Keeping the puzzle together has me working an average of 70-80 hours a week but I manage to take myself through YMCA Boot Camps and plan to run in local road races.

For more information, visit Oakland Tech's Web site: http://oaklandtech.com/staff/

January Date Set for Rockridge BID Hearing

by Annette Floystrup, RCPC boardmember

College Avenue merchants and professionals, as well as area residents, will have the opportunity to comment on the Rockridge Business Improvement District (BID) and its operation on January 26, when the City Council's Community Economic Development Committee (CEDC) takes up the matter of renewing the district. This issue, first scheduled for an October meeting, was postponed due to lack of proper notice (Rockridge News, November 2009).

The purpose of the January hearing is to determine whether the City should renew its contract with the Rockridge District Association (RDA) to administer the special assessment district that College Avenue merchants and professionals pay into. The hearing gives the City Council the options of continuing, suspending, revising, or ending the BID. Appropriate topics for comment at the hearing could range from whether the BID should be continued at all to issues with its management and efficacy. Comments may be submitted to the committee by e-mail, letter or in person.

Rockridge BID Hearing Schedule	
When:	January 26, 2pm
What:	Community Economic Development Committee
Where:	Oakland City Hall, Meeting Room 1
Direct comments to the Committee:	
Ignacio De La Fuente, Chairperson	idelafuente@oaklandnet.com
Jane Brunner	JBrunner@oaklandnet.com
Patricia Kernighan	pkernighan@oaklandnet.com
Larry Reid	lreid@oaklandnet.com

Concern Grows Over BIDs

Special assessment districts like the Rockridge BID and the Oakland LLAD (Landscape and Lighting Assessment District) are proliferating across the nation in response to legal constraints involved in raising new taxes. The rapid growth of these special assessment districts has generated academic scrutiny. In a paper entitled "The Problem with Being Special: Democratic Values and Special Assessments,"* authors Vladimir Kogan and Mathew D. McCubbins of UC San Diego argue that these districts pose unique difficulties that they call "social choice pathologies," which manifest in abuses of the process that the authors dub Agenda Control, Gerrymandering, Layered Democracy, Representation, and Agency Problems.

Agency problems arise when authority is delegated and "the agents act opportunistically, maximizing their own gains at the expense of their principal's interests. Such opportunism is most likely to emerge when agents possess hidden information (i.e., knowledge about a choice that is unavailable to the principal or that is available but too costly for the principal to obtain), which is often referred to as adverse selection, or when the agent can take hidden action (i.e., the principal cannot observe the agent's actions), which is known as moral hazard."

Professor McCubbins has been asked to testify before a committee of the California Legislature in February.

Kogan is a graduate student at the Department of Political Science, University of California – San Diego. McCubbins is Distinguished Professor and Chancellor's Associates Chair in Political Science, University of California – San Diego; Visiting Professor of Law, University of Southern California; Co-Director, USC-Caltech Center for the Study of Law and Politics.

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* http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1277522

Runners, Take Your Marks!

Is your throat getting hoarse from all that arm-chair quarterbacking? Do you own a few pairs of still-pristine running shoes, but aren't sure where they are?

Here we are in 2010 and it's New Year's Resolution time. This time, it's easy: For the first time in 25 years, a marathon run is coming to Oakland. But the marathon is only part of the fun.

Welcome to the Oakland Running Festival, March 27 and 28, 2010. In addition to the marathon, there will be a half-marathon, 4-person relays, a 5K run and a kids' fun run. To add to the fun, local running groups will offer training sessions.

Learn more at http://www.oaklandmarathon.com/Home_Page.htm



Me. I've been an Allstate Agent for 10 years. And riding bikes for 17. That means I can talk all day about insurance features and discounted rates, but I'd just as soon talk about a new route you've found. Let's talk today.

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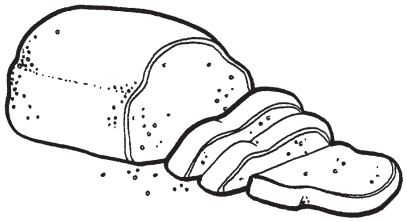
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Daily Bread on the Rise: Seeks Volunteers

by Joan Sautter

In the September 2004 issue of The Rockridge News, our community was introduced to Daily Bread, the all-volunteer organization that gathers leftover foods from many sources (e.g., markets, bakeries, restaurants, and even occasional parties and social events) around Oakland and Berkeley and deliveries them to shelters and charitable organizations that provide food to people in need. As a result, folks who may otherwise be going hungry or have only limited access to food get to sample some of the best food that the Bay Area has to offer. The September issue, which is archived on the Rockridge News Web site, describes the origins of the Daily Bread connection with Market Hall, which donates generously to this program. They supply on a daily basis bakery goods, produce, and salads and other leftovers from the deli.

Volunteers typically commit to about an hour a week, taking on a regular pickup and delivery assignment once a week. Daily Bread can alway use new volunteers and currently we are in need of several volunteers for the Market Hall "run." If you can spare this time and are interested in participating in this worthwhile food recycling program, we would love to connect with you. Anyone interested should call Patrice Ignelzi, the program coordinator, at 510/526-3123 (e-mail: patrice@pcsyes.com), or, if you live close to Market Hall and particularly would like to volunteer for this site, call Joan Sautter at 510/655-6432 (e-mail: joanmsautter@yahoo.com). Also, we are looking for a new site with an available refrigerator in the Market Hall area so that we can store perishable food donations overnight and deliver them the following day. Any leads will be appreciated.

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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.

Officers:

When I get my updates from the computer-generated Crimeview, I see reports of VT which is vehicle theft. Please describe this as opposed to vehicle burglary. Also, if VT is a stolen car, is the listed address where the car was found or where it was stolen from? And, if it reflects only one, i.e., where found, is information available on where the car was stolen from?

— Sue Feinstein

Officers Reply:

Auto theft is different from auto burglary. Auto theft is the actual taking of the vehicle itself, depriving the owner of possession of the vehicle, either temporarily or permanently, without the owner's permission.

Auto burglary is when the vehicle is locked and a person breaks into the vehicle, takes loose items from the vehicle, then leaves the area, leaving the vehicle still in possession of the owner. The address on Crimeview is the address where the vehicle was stolen from, showing the original location of the crime, not the location where the vehicle was recovered.

Another category of auto theft is "auto clout." Auto clout is when items attached to a car are removed, more commonly referred to as "stripping" a car.

This is an incident where the vehicle is not taken, and the suspect does not break into the vehicle to take items belonging to the owner. It is the actual taking of parts from the car itself.

Happy 2010!

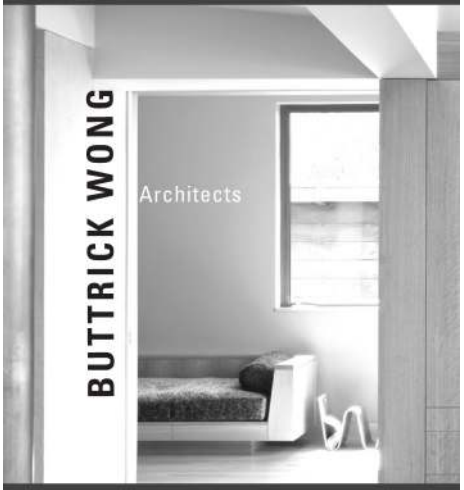
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Rockridge in Late December

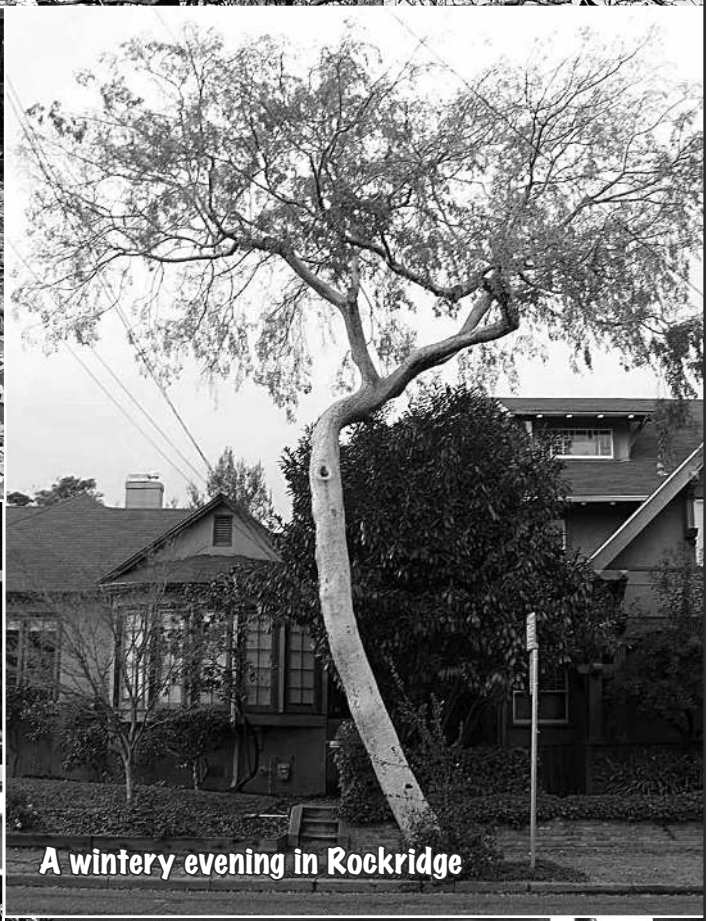


A happy shopper on College Avenue





A carpet of leaves for the holidays



A wintery evening in Rockridge



Santa visits Rockridge



Busy times for Claremont School

All Photos: Lydia Gans

Land Use in Review

from page 3

■ **The Impacts of the Recession**

Other than that, much of the land use news in Rockridge this year involved what didn't happen, due to the economic downturn. Several already-approved large development projects near the Telegraph/Claremont intersection, including Civiq, Creekside, and Kingfish, have been put on hold due to lack of financing, and the Kingfish has reopened as a bar. The closings of Cotton & Co. and Galvin's Workspace Furniture in the Dreyer's building have left a large gap in College Avenue's retail frontage at the centrally-located site. Proposals to fill those spaces with non-retail tenants brought a strong negative response from RCPC. RCPC's position was, and continues to be, that keeping College Avenue's C-31 zoned commercial area strong requires maintaining a critical mass of retail stores. Particularly given the Dreyer's building's central location, allowing those storefronts to transition to non-retail uses would be damaging in itself, as well as setting a dangerous precedent. At this point, it appears RCPC's position has been vindicated, and new retail tenants are rumored to be planned for both tenancies.

Elsewhere on College Avenue, the recession has led to closure of a number of College Avenue merchants, but new merchants are coming in to fill many of these vacancies. In short, College Avenue appears to be weathering the economy without the major dislocation some had feared.

■ **School Expansion Plans**

Several Rockridge schools either proposed or built expansions to their facilities. Chabot Elementary School is nearing the end of a major construction project to replace a group of outdated portable classrooms with new permanent buildings. The enlarged facility should provide an improved learning environment for Rockridge's younger students. Additional improvements to both Chabot and Claremont Schools are planned, using funding provided to mitigate the long-term impacts of the Caldecott Tunnel expansion.

Meanwhile, two Rockridge private schools, the College Preparatory School and Rockridge Montessori School, also proposed facility expansions.

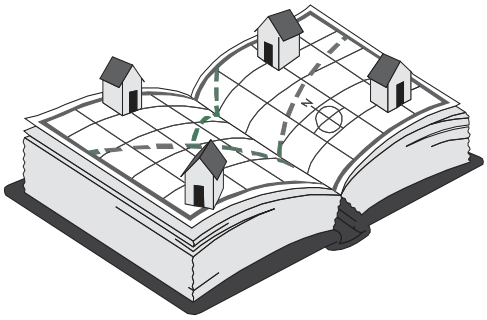
Rockridge Montessori sought a third expansion of its use permit, to include over 200 students and convert an adjoining residence into a school building. RCPC has echoed community concerns about cumulative traffic impacts from the school's continued expansion.

The College Preparatory School has proposed a long-term capital improvement plan including a new performing arts center and several classroom buildings. The proposal would also legalize College Prep's student body size, which has gone well beyond that authorized by its existing use permit.

The school's neighbors raised a series of concerns about the expansion, including noise, traffic, parking, and visual impacts. RCPC attempted to mediate the dispute and proposed a number of added mitigation measures, most of which were accepted by the school. Nevertheless, when the City approved the school's revised plans, the neighbors appealed the decision to the planning commission. RCPC decided to stay neutral on the appeal.

■ **Long-term Development Policy in Rockridge**

Finally, with the recession perhaps turning the corner, RCPC is planning to open a discussion about a long-term development policy for Rockridge. Rockridge has been a continuing battleground between developers seeking higher density projects and residents wanting to maintain the area's current pleasant ambiance and fearful of traffic jams and towering buildings. It's not clear whether any middle-ground can be found between these apparently conflicting agendas, but RCPC will, in the coming year, hold some discussions where each side can make its case, with the hope of encouraging a productive dialogue.



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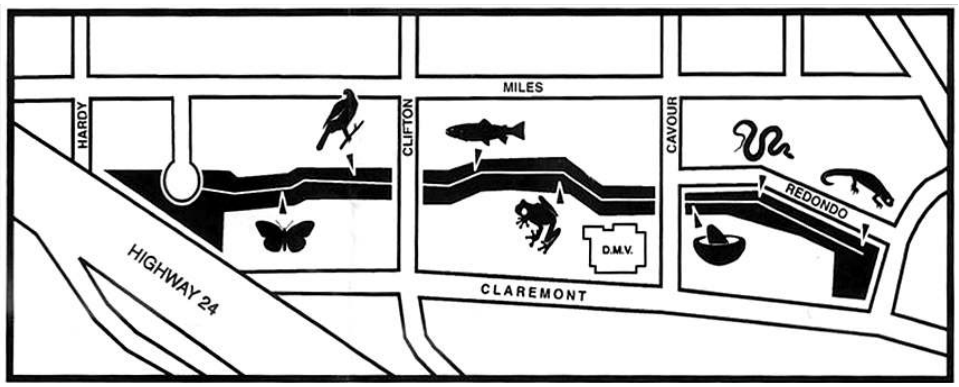
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FROG Park Art

from page 2

members past and present, and especially Jennifer Cooper.

Give back to your Park. Attend the next steering committee meeting. Details, page 1. For more information, contact: info@frogpark.org.



Art installation sites on the Greenbelt parkway betweeen Hardy and Redondo Parks display the history, ecology and creature inhabitants of FROG Park.

BART Earthquake Safety Construction Comes to FROG Park

From a notice provided by BART

As part of BART's system-wide Earthquake Safety Program, strengthening work is in progress on the North Oakland aerial structures. The work includes adding steel and concrete to foundations, wrapping columns with steel reinforcements, and protecting utilities and equipment.

Starting in early January, the northern basketball court in Hardy Park will be closed and micropile installation drilling to reinforce column foundations begun. Activities will include the use of a rig-mounted boring device to drill into the ground, placing steel and concrete grout to fill the opening, and the placement of a steel beam for testing. Work hours are 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, with emergency work as necessary. There will be noise barriers in place during the work to reduce any impacts to park users and local residents. The work will require a partial lane closure and loss of some parking on the eastbound side of Hudson Street. Please note that construction traffic will include regular personnel vehicles and occasionally dump trucks, concrete mixers, or other large vehicles. Please watch for signs with notices and safety information.

Further construction on the three columns running through the park and seismic strengthening on one column on northbound Hudson Street and two columns on Claremont Avenue will begin after the start of this micropile installation. Notifications will be sent out in advance of all stages of work. The total duration of construction in this area will be approximately one year. BART hopes for your patience and cooperation during this work.

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This Year 2009 in Rockridge Real Estate

by Ortrun Niesar

The year 2009 is probably one that Rockridge home owners and their Realtors would like to forget. In fact, that is easily done because nothing much memorable occurred during the year: The sky did not fall and Rockridge buyers did not gain much of a leg up over sellers. The blame for a virtually non-existent market here can go largely to the general atmosphere of malaise that has blanketed this country most of the year. In reality, the financial climate improved considerably in the latter half of the year. Sales activity could have been better. Positive reaction to this did not really enter the picture until the third quarter, rendering the rest of this year in real estate activity moot for Rockridge.

The statistics we have been keeping for you since 2002 show that Rockridge operates in a micro-market that continues to defy regional market statistics for Alameda County. We are doing better than most areas, but we are also experiencing a slow decline, largely due to little sales activity. Like a fire storm, a slow market also creates its own climate that can affect both sellers and buyers adversely. For example, when refinancing your home, appraisers are required to use local sales that have occurred in the three months prior for comparison. Not only have Rockridge sales been few and far between, but also many homes that were offered for sale in recent months were frankly in poor condition or distressed in other ways, thus skewing the overall picture dramatically. Some of that is reflected in the figures below. Ironically, whenever there has been a well prepared house on the market, sellers have seen multiple offers. Buyers are waiting in the wings.

Average Sale Prices by No. of Bedrooms

Year	2BR	4+BR	Nbr. Homes Sold
2005	802,513	1,466,920	124
2006	760,782	1,498,687	112
2007	780,268	1,330,031	127
2008	757,011	1,329,080	98
2009	711,967	1,388,314	79

Compare Rockridge Home Sale Prices 2002- 2009

Year	Avg. Price	Median Price	% Change
2002	770,604	691,500	
2003	847,637	750,000	8.5
2004	902,000	805,000	7.3
2005	1,032,139	930,500	15.6
2006	1,111,317	903,500	-3.0
2007	1,106,186	1,000,000	10.3
2008	1,029,153	905,000	- 9.5
2009	904,954	850,000	-6.0

Comparative Sales Analysis

As you can see, current prices have dipped below 2005, but if you have owned your home for five years or more you are probably still in good shape. Some homeowners will likely also have problems with their refinancing projects based on recent sales history. Average price per square foot for 2-bedroom homes came in at $589, versus $593 in 2008; not bad. But average price per square foot for 3-bedroom homes was $465, versus $517 in 2008. A fair number of the homes that were sold in 2009 unfortunately were not representative of the typical Rockridge home. Further, homes with four or more bedrooms showed a price of $411 per square foot, down from $454 last year. Larger homes naturally show a lower overall price per square foot since other factors, such as lot size, will not change significantly. Also, the competition for these larger homes is not as intense as for our traditional Craftsman bungalow homes, so price negotiations can bring substantial discounts. If you are refinancing, be sure that your appraiser knows the local market and has knowledge of comparable homes in your neighborhood. Your finance officer or Realtor should be able to help you with that.

Outlook for 2010

This could be a positive year for Rockridge. The National Association of Realtors announced last week that existing home sales rose 7.4 percent in November, the best increase since February of 2007, and they are optimistic that there will be brisk sales activity through the first three quarters of this year, that is until federal funds run out and private funding drives interest rates higher. There are numerous incentive programs available. Mortgage rates are still hovering around 5 percent; however they are expected to rise to about 6 percent by the end of 2010. If you are planning to refinance, do it now. If you plan to sell, it is a good idea to prepare your home properly for sale. If you are looking to buy, be aware that the banks continue to move cautiously. For best results, consider offering a large down payment, low debt/income ratio and solid employment documentation.

This analysis covers Rockridge homes sales from the Berkeley border in the north, south to Broadway Terrace and 51Street, west to Telegraph Avenue and east to Hwy 13. Information supplied by EBRD 2009 is deemed to be reliable but not guaranteed. Ortrun Niesar is a Realtor with Prudential California. ortrun.niesar@prurealty.com.

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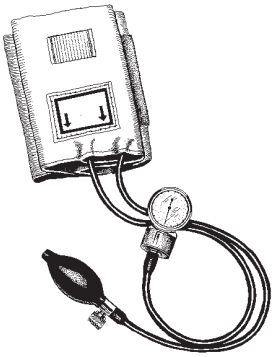
From January 1 – 31, as part of the Red Cross' Project Plasma promotion, all presenting blood donors can enter a drawing for a new 50" plasma HDTV. The drawing will take place on February 4, giving the winner time to set up that new TV before the game gets underway on February 7.

Enter at any one of five nearby blood donor centers in Oakland, Pleasant Hill, Pleasanton, Newark, and San Jose, or at mobile blood drives during the promotion period.

In Rockridge, the donor center is at the Oakland Blood Center, 6230 Claremont Avenue.

Call 800-GIVE-LIFE (800/448-3543) or visit HelpSaveALife.org/NC to schedule an appointment.

Individuals who are at least 17 years old (16 with parental permission), meet height and weight requirements (at least 110 pounds based on height) and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood.



— Sara O'Brien, American Red Cross

Ed. Note: See Community calendar, page 15, for additional Blood Bank drawings in January.

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Berkeley Daily Planet Fundraiser

Sunday, Jan. 24, 4:30--7:30. The Omni, 4799 Shattuck. $50singles/$90 couples (suggested donation). Live music by Faye Carol and others. Refreshments, hosted bar. For more info + to RSVP: Bob/Al 655-3841, broklcrofts@earthlink.net.

Skin Care Salon

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Health Talks

"How to Lose Five Pounds of Extra Weight," Jan 9, 12 pm. "Train Without Pain; Benefits of the Anti-Inflammatory Diet," Jan 23, 12 pm. Rockridge Community Room. No cost. www.oaklandchiropractor.net Robert Townsend DC 510/708-9363.

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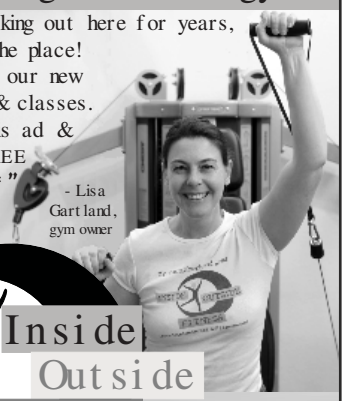
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E-mail *Rockridge News* Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210 (after noon), or mail to: Rockridge News Community Calendar, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas are invited to voice their concerns about crime and public safety, **2nd Thursday each month, 7pm.** Rockridge Library, upstairs meeting room, 5366 College Ave. info@rockridgencpc.com or infofordenise@yahoo.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN:

- **Toddler Story Time:** Every Saturday, 10:30am.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am.
- **Baby and Toddler Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am, upstairs.
- **Pajama Time:** 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7pm. Kids invited to come in pajamas.
  - **Snow Stories and Craft:** Snowflake cutting, 1/12.
  - **Cat and Dog Stories and Craft:** Face painting and mask making. 1/26.

FOR TEENS:

- **Rockridge Ninjas (Anime Club): Teens 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. each month (1/12 & 2/9), 5 to 6:30pm, upstairs meeting rm. Susy: 597-5017.
- **Jewelry Making Workshop** with **Chelsee Robinson:** Make jewelry for yourself or as a gift. Wed., 2/3, 4 to 5:30pm. To sign up call 597-5017.

FOR ADULTS

- **Writers' Support/Critique Group:** All writers welcome. Bring 15 copies of up to 5 double-spaced pages of any prose for on-site reading/discussion (you're also welcome to come empty-handed). Meets 3rd Saturday each month, 1 to 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 (call to confirm). Advance sign-up starts 5pm. More info: 597-5017.

ART EXHIBITS: (Call to confirm dates).

Gallery:

- Jan.: **Oakland Art Assoc.:** group show.
- Feb.: **Richard Vannucci** photographs.

Lobby Display Case:

- **TBA (Call for info).**

Library Hours
Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.
Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 10am to 5:30pm.
Fri., 12 to 5:30pm. **Closed Sundays and Mondays (Library branches no longer open on Mondays).**
Also closed: Fri. 1/15 and Tues. 1/19.

Peralta Elementary School Tours

Prospective families have an opportunity to visit classrooms and learn about this K-5 small, diverse, arts anchor school before the OUSD registration period ends on Jan.15. Tours on Wed. 1/6; Fri. 1/8; Tues. 1/12 and Thurs. 1/14. To sign up for a school tour at 460-63rd St., call the Peralta office at 879-1450.

An Evening With the Peace Corps

Meet a Peace Corps Recruiter to learn about opportunities in 76 countries in education, health, business, environment and more. No upper age limit to join. Tues.,1/26, 6 to 7:30pm, Rockridge Library, 5366 College Ave. More info: Yune Lee, 452-8444, sfinfo@peacecorps.gov, or www.peacecorps.gov.

Diesel Book/Poetry Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Sun., 1/17, 3pm: **Jerry Ratch:** *A Body Divided*.
- Tues., 1/19, 7pm: **Jacob Needleman:** *What is God?*
- Thurs., 1/28, 7pm: **Norman Dog** (local illustrator and cartoonist **Raymond Larrett**) will discuss *The 37 Cartoons You Should Read Before You Die*.
- Sun., 1/31, 3pm: **Poetry Flash** with **Cheryl Klein** and **Terry Wolverton**.
- Sat., 2/6, 3pm: **Amy Bloom:** *Where the God of Love Hangs Out*.

DIESEL, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave. Info about other events and book discussion groups: 653-9965 or: events@dieselbookstore.com.

Wisteria Ways Concert Series

Teslim: Bay Area musicians **Laila Flexer,** violinist and **Gari Hegedus** on oud and a variety of stringed instruments perform Greek, Turkish and Sephardic music. Saturday, 1/16, 8pm (house opens at 7:30pm). $15-20 donation for musicians (cash at the door).383 61st Street (inside venue, not wheelchair accessible). For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir

Celebrates the New Year with "Truth, Justice & Peace" Winter Concerts. Saturday, 1/23 at 2pm and 7pm. First Presb. Church, 2619 B'way. Info: 547-4441 or www.piedmontchoirs.org/concerts.lasso.

Christensen Heller Gallery

Exhibit of paintings by **Kim Bach**. Show runs Jan. 15 through Mar.28. Galley hrs: Wed-Sat., 11am to 6pm; Sun. noon to 5pm. 5829 College Ave. Info: 655-5952, baird@christensenheller.com or www.christensenheller.com.

Calif. College of the Arts (CCA)

- **Multiculturalism and Identity Exhibition:** Combined show by CCA students and students at the Univ. of Cape Town, So. Africa. Show will later travel to Cape Town Univ. Media range from photography, video, sound, textiles and drawing. Jan. 19-23; **Reception: Jan. 20, 5:30-7:30pm.** 5212 B'way, North/South Galleries (hrs: 11am to 6pm). Info: mpoli@cca.edu.
- **Reading by Adam Johnson,** author and lecturer at Stanford Univ. Jan.19, 7:30pm.Presented as part of CCA's Hearsay Reading Series. 5212 B'way, Nahl Hall. Info: 597-3708 or humblepie@cca.edu.
- **Open Secrets: 3rd Annual Math and Science Fair:** features projects showcasing the intersection of art with math and science concepts. Jan.22 -29. Hrs: Mon. – Fri. 8:30am to noon and 1 – 4:30pm (closed Wed. morning). Winning submissions announced at **reception on Fri. Jan.22, 7 – 10pm**. 5212 B'way, Oliver Art Center. Info: 597-3709 or lreed@cca.edu.
- **A Paper + Cloth Dream Exhibition:** print works on paper and cloth by students at CCA and its sister school, Osaka Univ. of Arts in Japan. Feb. 8-19. Hrs: Mon.-Fri. 8:30am to noon and 1-4:30pm (closed Wed. morning). **Reception: Thurs. 2/18, 5:30-7:30pm**. 5212 B'way, Oliver Art Center. Info: nobanion@cca.edu.

North Oakland Senior Center

Program Highlights: Computer classes; health Insurance counseling and advocacy program; exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Groups and more. Hrs: Mon. – Fri., 8:45am to 4:45pm. 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Subscribe to "The North Oakland Senior Times," for a schedule of classes/events and lunch menu ($2.25 to $4.). Info about events, membership, and opportunities to be a volunteer: 597-5085.

American Red Cross

- **Mobile Blood Drives:** In Jan., **all donors can enter two drawings: one for a 50" plasma TV and another for a one-night stay at Inn by the Lake in South Lake Tahoe** (not available at high school or college blood drives). Call 800-GIVE-LIFE (800-448-3543) or visit HelpSaveALife.org/NC to find a location near you.
- **Volunteer Orientations:** Tour the Oakland Blood Center. Learn to assist blood donors, deliver blood, help with special projects. 6230 Claremont Avenue. To get training schedules and to sign up call Anne at 594-5165 or BlackstoneA@usa.redcross.org.

Chabot Space & Science Center Volunteer Orientation

Many volunteer opportunities available, including assisting visitors and working at the Starry Nights Gift Shop. Sign up now for the next orientation meeting on Saturday, January 23, at http://chabotspace.org/getinvolved/. For more information contact Megan Gray, Volunteer Services Manager, 510/336-7414 or mgray@chabotspace.org.

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