www.rockridge.org

THE Rockridge News

VOL. 25 ■ NO. 3 ■ ISSUE NO. 265 ■ March 6, 2010 ■ CIRCULATION: 5,100 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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

RCPC Town Hall Meeting ☛ AGENDA March 2010

Thursday, March 18, 7:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library,
5366 College Avenue at Manila,
Community Room (Upstairs)

■ **Zoning Changes: For the past two years, Oakland's planning staff has been working on rewriting the city's 50-year-old zoning ordinance.** That job is nearly done, and will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for approval later this year. Come hear about the proposed zoning and what it will mean for Rockridge, North Oakland and the rest of the city. Planning staff will present the new zoning maps and listen to your comments. *[Two other community meetings are scheduled. See details, page 4.]*

■ **RCPC Board Elections:** Also on the agenda: hear from the candidates for the April RCPC Board elections. Read their statements on page 3.

■ Special Notice ■

RCPC April Meeting ☛ Date Change ☚

The April RCPC Town Hall meeting will be held **Thursday, April 8**, 2010, beginning at 7 p.m.

It will be a **joint meeting** with the Greater Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), and will feature special guest speaker **Oakland Police Chief Anthony Batts**.

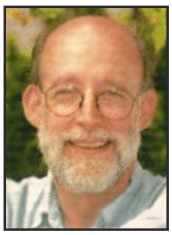
Rockridge residents will also be able to vote for members of the RCPC board of directors.

Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) will hold its board elections, as well.

The meeting will be held at the **Rockridge Branch Library, 5366 College Avenue at Manila, Community Room (Upstairs)** ■

RCPC Board Candidates to Address March Meeting


Jon Gabel


Stuart Flashman


Annette Floystrup


Melinda H. Frey


Chris Walters

Ride for a Reason: California Education

Claremont Parents Peddle Education Concerns in Sacramento



◂ Claremont Middle School parents Mike Mages, Ron Kriss and Mike Napolitano, and John Harkins, a San Francisco parent and supporter, bicycled to Sacramento in 2009 to meet with other Claremont supporters and state politicians. They are ready to do it again in 2010. You can help!

PHOTO: JULIE HARRIS

by Mike Napolitano, Claremont parent and bicyclist

There is a crisis in funding for education in California. Over the past two years, state funding for K-12 education in California has been cut by almost 20 per cent. California currently ranks 45th in per-pupil spending and has the highest student-to-teacher ratio in the nation.

An announcement at a school meeting last April that Claremont Middle School would lose $325,000 from its site budget for the 2009-10 school year (almost 15 percent) galvanized a group of Claremont parents to organize a protest to draw attention to the crisis.

Mike Mages, Ron Kriss, and Mike Napolitano, parents of students at Claremont, Chabot Elementary and Oakland Tech, and John Harkins, a San Francisco parent and supporter, rode their bikes more than 80 miles to the State Capitol in 2009.

At the Capitol, other parents and students joined the cyclists, and all presented a petition to State Senator Loni Hancock and State Assemblymen Sandre Swanson and Tom Ammiano calling for a restoration of the cuts made in education funding. Hancock accepted the petition and added her signature to the 200 collected by the cyclers over a two-week period.

Now, almost a year later, plans are being made for a second Sacramento ride on May 8. Ride planners have added a fundraising component and christened the event "Ride

▸ **Ride for Schools, page 13**



CHAT-CHAT-CHAT-Krunk! CHAT-CHAT-CHAT-Krunk! Humm, slush-slush. Humm, slush-slush. Concrete breakers and earth borers have taken over a corner of Hardy Park as BART continues its earthquake retrofit work. With their intriguing noises and mysterious activities, construction sites easily attract sidewalk supervisors. One such gawker recently noted the activity and the noise, and learned from an actual supervisor that an 8-foot-high plywood sound wall and consistent sound monitoring by a project safety officer help minimize construction effects on neighboring residential areas. Hardy Park work is scheduled in three phases and should be complete in about a year, the supervisor said. TEXT/PHOTO: DON KINKEAD

Climate Coalition Calls for Local Action to Meet Global Warming Threats



◂ City Council President Jane Brunner meets with participants at her February community advisory meeting as they convene to consider the question, "How can we as individuals, and as a City, address global warming?" Brunner noted that Oakland is close to completing an Energy and Climate Action Plan to address global warming and set greenhouse gas reduction goals. Oakland Climate Action Coalition members also addressed the meeting.

PHOTO: CITY STAFF

by Dan Rademacher, Sierra Club volunteer

About 70 North Oakland residents turned out on a rainy Saturday morning in February to talk about what global warming means for Oakland. The city has approved an aggressive goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 36 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. On March 30, city officials will present the first draft of their Energy and Climate Action Plan for meeting that target.

The Rockridge meeting was convened by City Council President Jane Brunner, who foresees many more meetings as the council solicits input and support for the climate plan.

Oakland's Sustainability Coordinator Garrett Fitzgerald and the Oakland Climate Action Coalition's Emily Kirsch presented the case for taking action locally: Oakland

◗ Climate Action, page 13

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Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.
Closed Sundays and Mondays, and March 31 and April 6
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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- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

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Articles submitted for publication may be e-mailed to the above address. Submissions are limited to 600 words; must include the author's name, phone number, e-mail address, and city or neighborhood of residence; and are subject to editing. To reprint a *Rockridge News* article, please contact the editor.

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES

Publication date of the next issue is
☛ April 3, 2010
☛ April deadline is March 18, 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.)*

Election 2010: RCPC Board Candidates

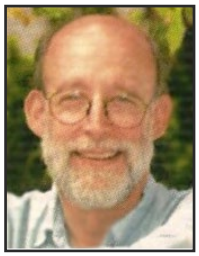
Jon Gabel
Ocean View Dr.



When I first ran for the RCPC board two years ago, my platform was "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That statement is still – perhaps more — true today. To us, our neighborhood is a wonderful place to live. To some others, it is an opportunity to profit, regardless of the consequences. RCPC has continued to fight the good fight to keep Rockridge livable. As a 35-year Rockridge resident, I have enjoyed the benefits of living here and I would like to help pass those benefits on to my present and future neighbors by continuing to serve on the RCPC board.

During my term on the board, I have: served as chair of the Web site committee; worked to keep offices from replacing retail at street level on College Avenue; and led the effort to limit the increases in Residential Permit Parking fees.

Stuart Flashman
Ocean View Dr.



This ends my first term as an elected RCPC board member, and my second year as board chair. We've accomplished a lot in those two years. We defended College Avenue's C-31 zoning, responded to two Safeway development proposals, and several other large development projects. We joined and settled a lawsuit against Caltrans over the Caldecott Tunnel, winning several million dollars to help mitigate impacts on Rockridge. We participated in revamping the City's outdated zoning ordinance, and worked on many other smaller, but still important community projects.

I ask you to re-elect me so we can meet the many challenges still facing us. We may have turned the corner on the recession, but Oakland is still in trouble. We need to make sure we control development, rather than having it control us. Crime is also an ongoing problem, and our schools always need more help. Your support would be appreciated.

Annette Floystrup
Birch Ct.



I have lived in Rockridge since 1955. I have been a child, renter, homeowner and home-based small business person here.

I currently serve on the RCPC board. This past term, I have been a representative to the Safeway talks, organized the RCPC Out & About booth and the Halloween Parade. Additionally, I was a part of the 11-year process that built the Rockridge branch library, and also served on the FORL board.

I have a strong background in economic development, having served as both board member and chairperson of the Bay Area Small Business Development Corporation, overseeing a $19 million revolving loan fund, with an emphasis on lending to women and minority owners.

I hope to serve this community for a final term, as I feel that I bring a unique perspective, that of community memory, to the RCPC board, understanding the needs of residents and business alike.

Melinda H. Frey
Manila Ave.



I have been an Oakland resident for 20 years and have been a Rockridge resident and homeowner for eight. During this time, I have sat on the sidelines reading about the challenges that face our city. As I see more and more empty storefronts along College Avenue and read about the budget deficits Oakland faces, I feel it is time to take a more active role in helping keep Rockridge a welcome place to live and visit.

I am a firm believer in the concept, "think global, act local." As such, I feel we cannot keep the character of Rockridge we all love without continually grappling with the struggles of the city as a whole. To me, the most crucial element to our community and city right now is making sure there are no reductions in our police force. A safe community is key to a healthy and vital community.

Chris Walters
Hillegass Ave.



My interest in serving as a board member on the RCPC arises principally from a desire to contribute to an amazing community. I am a relatively recent resident and Berkeley Law graduate, but this neighborhood appears to have a way of attaching itself quickly. My fiancée and I thoroughly enjoy the livability of the area — the beautiful mix of residential and commercial areas — especially as compared with other places we have lived. As a board member, I would approach issues from the perspective of a person who wants to see the neighborhood remain vibrant without stagnating.

As a former public school teacher, I have a keen interest in seeing local schools succeed and would work towards that goal as a board member. I also have a background in land use law. In that vein, as a board member, I would promote what is often referred to as "smart growth."

RCPC Board Election Procedures

At the RCPC Town Hall meeting Thursday, March 18, which begins at 7:30 p.m., candidates for the RCPC board of directors will introduce themselves and describe their platforms for Rockridge.

There will be two opportunities in April to vote for the candidates of your choice: You may vote at the Town Hall meeting **Thursday, April 8**, starting at 7 p.m. (see page 1), or you may vote **Saturday**, **April 10**, in the lobby of the Rockridge library, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Voter Eligibility

People age 18 and over who live within RCPC boundaries are eligible to vote. Verification will be by driver's license or DMV ID card showing an address within RCPC boundaries, as depicted on the RCPC website at rockridge.org.

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Next meeting: March 24. Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room: 7:30 p.m.

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman,
RCPC Land Use Committee chair

■ Citywide Zoning Update

At February's meeting of the commercial corridor technical advisory group (TAG), City staff provided their responses to public comments, including those of RCPC. RCPC had asked that the new CN-1 zoning for College Avenue set a maximum project size of 50,000 sq. ft. consistent with the zone's basic goal of promoting pedestrian-oriented comparison shopping. RCPC also asked that the zoning limit the number of variances that could be granted to a single project. Staff rejected both suggestions. There will be one final TAG meeting March 25, 6-8 p.m., in City Hall hearing room No. 4. Zoning staff will present the new proposed zoning at RCPC's March Town Hall meeting. See front page 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.

■ College Ave. Safeway Shopping Center Project (6310 College at Claremont Avenue)

It appears likely that the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for this 61,000 sq. ft. project will be released for public review in late March or early April. During the 45-day review period, there will be a hearing before the Planning Commission where oral comments on the DEIR will be accepted. Written comments on the DEIR should be directed to the project planner, Peterson Vollman (238-6167, e-mail: pvollman@oaklandnet.com).

The Zoning Counter

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

Hardy Park

Proposal: To construct a 49-square-foot (approx.) public restroom facility to replace an existing portable bathroom located 35-feet from edge of curb.
Applicant: City of Oakland, Park and Recreation Division 510/238-3682
Owner: California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)
Plannning Permits Required: Minor Conditional Use Permit to construct a public restroom in a park
Case Planner: Jason Madani, 510/238-4790 or jsmadani@oaklandnet.com

6311 College Avenue

Proposal: To convert an existing 1,483 square-foot coffee/chocolate shop (formerly Lulu Rae Confectioners) into a full-service restaurant with beer and wine sales, under the same ownership as Wood Tavern restaurant.
Applicants: Rich and Rebekah Wood / R. R Wood, LLC (business owners) 510/654-6607
Owner: John Chalik Trust
Planning Permits Required: Minor Conditional Use Permit to establish a Full Service Restaurant Commercial Activity in the C-31 Zone
Historic Status: Potential Designated Historic Property (PDHP);
Survey rating: C3
Case Planner: Jason Madani, 510/238-4790 or jsmadani@oaklandnet.com

District 1 Meetings: Proposed Zoning Mapping

Meetings with City Council District 1 neighborhood groups will be held in March to discuss proposed zoning maps and new zones. The presentations will be in three phases:

Phase I includes meeting with active neighborhood groups to vet the mapping proposals.

Phase II includes large community workshops, sponsored by Strategic Planning, where mapping proposals will be discussed with the larger community.

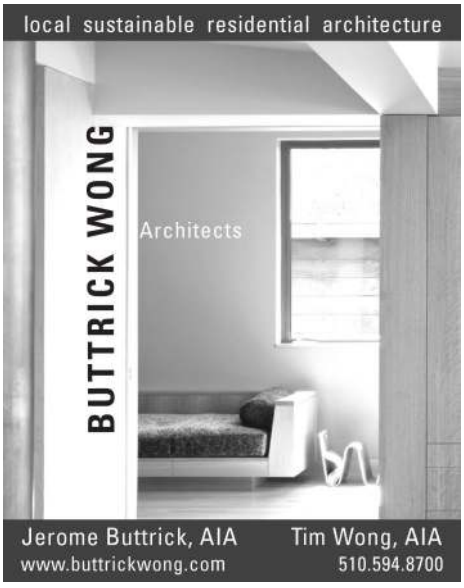
Phase III involves the public hearing and adoption process: Zoning Update Committee, Planning Commission and City Council.

If you cannot attend the March 18 RCPC meeting, you may attend one of the others.

Neighborhood Group	Date & Time	Location
North Hills Phoenix Association & Panoramic Hill	Thursday, March 11 6:45 p.m.	Kaiser School, 25 S. Hill Court
San Pablo Avenue-Golden Gate Improvement Association (SPAGGIA)	Wednesday, March 17, 7 p.m.	Golden Gate Recreation Center, 1075 62nd Street
Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC)	Thursday, March 18 7:30 p.m.	Rockridge Branch Library (upstairs meeting room), 5366 College Avenue

Information from Zachary Wald, chief of staff for Jane Brunner, District 1 Councilwoman and City Council President. Additional information is available at the city's Oakland Citywide Zoning Update Web page: http://www.oaklandnet.com/government/ceda/revised/planningzoning/ZoningUpdateProject/products.asp

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FROG Park News

Restroom Construction Complete by Year's End

FROG Park was built in 2001 without a restroom. The present Porta-Potty was installed by FROG as a "temporary measure" pending funding. Thanks to Jane Brunner's staff and the city of Oakland, construction will soon begin on a permanent, city-owned, restroom. The 49 sq. ft. facility, modeled after the Buena Vista Park facility, will be located at the current Porta-Potty site, be open seven days a week and be securely locked at night.

If you have questions or comments, contact Denise Louie, restroom project manager, at 510/238-3682, or Nila Kim, staff aide to Councilwoman Jane Brunner, 510/238-7011.

Celebrate Earth Day at FROG Park

Saturday, April 17, 9 a.m. to noon. Meet at Hardy Playground (near Hardy Circle and Hudson/Claremont)

FROG is organizing a fun Earth Day clean-up Saturday, April 17, 9 a.m. to noon. Help honor the Earth and lend a hand at our neighborhood FROG Park. Bring work gloves, and gardening tools, rake or gardening fork, if you have them. Projects include playground cleaning, weeding, planting, turning and replacing the fibar, sweeping, and clearing the pond and creek bed in preparation for the creek turn-on. Hope to see you there! Visit www.oaklandearthday.com for more information. Contact Howard Ferrier at hwferrier@sbcglobal.net with questions.

Next Meeting



How would you like to get involved with improving and maintaining our neighborhood's park?

Perhaps you can help plan new landscaping, coordinate creek grate cleanups, or monitor construction of the new bathroom coming this year, or help with our database to assist with volunteer recruitment and communications, or be part of planning the fall maintenance day.

Whatever your interest and skills, we have ways for you to get involved. Plus, new ideas are always welcome. Join us Thursday, March 11, at 7 p.m. Contact info@frogpark.org for meeting location; bring your friends and family. If you can't attend, send an e-mail to info@frogpark.org and tell us what you're interested in. A FROG Park committee member will get back to you right away.

■ Keep Our Park Safe ■

■ **Please, leave no food in the playground. Scraps attract pests!** Please clean up after yourself and others. Deposit trash in the garbage receptacles.

■ **Vagrants or unsavory activity?** Call 777-3211 (cell) or 911 (land line) in an emergency; non-emergency, call 777-3333.

■ **Dog owners, please leash your dogs.** Please keep your dogs leashed at all times while outside the dog run area. It's the law! Dogs are forbidden in the playground and should not be tied to the playground fencing.

■ **Leave the sand in the sandbox.** Please keep your children's playground cushioning in great shape, which will help prevent structure rot.

MCGUIRE REAL ESTATE

By The Numbers 94618

Demand measured by the Market Action Index is increasing and days-on-market is trending downward. Even as more properties come available, these are all positive trends for the local market.

For the week of: **2/22/10**
Median List Price: **$899,000**
Avg. Days on Market: **152**
Avg. Price per Sq. Ft.: **$476**

Want all the facts? Stop by and discuss 94618 weekly updates with a Rockridge McGuire agent.

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Rockridge Community Planning Council

2009 Financial Statement
Fiscal Year January 1 – December 31, 2009

RCPC P&L	All as of 12/31/09
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Contributions	488
Rockridge News	46,489
Kitchen Tour	20,366
Total Income	67,343
Expense	
Office Expenses	3,411
Contractors	24,397
Printing – Rockridge News	10,968
Programs, Grants, Scholarships	3,658
Taxes, Licenses, Fees & Fines	110
Utilities	613
Total Expense	43,158
Net Income	**24,185**

FORL (Friends of the Rockridge Library) P&L	
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Contributions	10,562
Earned	1,552
Total Income	12,114
Expense	
Office & Misc Expenses	960
Contractors	5,772
Grants/Scholarships	6,618
Taxes, Licenses, Fees & Fines	359
Total Expense	13,710
Net Income	**-1,596**

FROG (Friends of the Rockridge Greenbelt) P&L	
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Earned	220
Total Income	220
Expense	
Bank Charges	145
Maintenance/Cleaning	1,588
Misc expenses FROG	-153
Program Expense	35
Total Expense	1,614
Net Ordinary Income	-1,394
Net Income	**-1,394**

RCPC, FROG, FORL Balance Sheet	
ASSETS	
CDs	
FORL	30,000
FROG	10,119
RCPC	36,815
TOTAL CDs	**76,934**
Checking/Savings	
FORL	18,334
FROG	42,503
RCPC	41,443
Whistlestop	442
Locksley Gardens	499
FROG: Bal of Paygo-de la Fuente	26,607
Total Checking/Savings	**129,828**
TOTAL ASSETS	**206,762**
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Grants Payable	8,000
Sales Tax	388
Total Liabilities	**8,388**
Equity	
Opening Bal Equity	163,172
Unrestrict (retained earnings)	-14,978
Net Income	50,181
Total Equity	**198,375**
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	**206,762**

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

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.

Thank you, neighbors, for our cat

Editor:

On February 14 our beloved black-and-white Tuxedo cat, Tilden, made a daring escape from our home for a great adventure. It quickly turned into a nightmare as our indoor-only pampered pet spent his first night outdoors alone and frightened. One night turned into five until he found his way home, hungry, dirty and scared.

We want to thank all of our friends and neighbors in the Fairview Park neighborhood of Rockridge for their help, good thoughts and words of comfort; for putting up with us lurking around your shrubbery and for our middle of the night searches, calling out to Tilden while shining our flashlight around; and for seeing our flyers and keeping a lookout. Special thanks to Teresa and her Basset Hound Sophie for trying to track Tilden's path; to Karl and the Regent Street neighborhood group; and to Burke, Joanne and Kay on Hillegass who not only let us go through their yards and outbuilding, but also let us search their basements and crawl spaces.



Tilden the cat, safe and sound.
Photo: Julie Hardgrove

Too often simple kindnesses and good deeds go unacknowledged. We did not want that to happen here. You all have our heartfelt thanks.

— Julie Hardgrove, Cliff Cline and Tilden

What is happening Next Door to the Safeway Center Site?

Editor:

While some buildings and their usage are followed with detail in The Rockridge News, I have noticed that one is never mentioned. I am writing about the large building in the Rockridge center at the south end of the parking lot from the Safeway store which has been covered in past issues.

This building has been empty for an estimated 15-20 years; when last used, it was an Emil Villa's sparerib restaurant. For some time work has been going on there, but there is no sign up shedding any light. It is not clear whether the new usage planned for this building will be useful or harmful to people in the neighborhood. I request that if you have any information on this matter, you share it with the readers.

— Edwin Koumrian

RCPC Land Use Committee Chair Stuart Flashman responds:

The former Emil Villa's restaurant site (actually owned by the Claremont Country Club) is being leased to CSAA as their new Oakland office (replacing the building on MacArthur Boulevard). The site is technically outside of RCPC's borders, and the new use is fully consistent with the site's C-30 zoning, so no city zoning approval was needed and there was no opportunity for neighborhood comments.

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City Temporarily Suspends Rockridge BID Contract

by Annette Floystrup

The February 16 Oakland City Council meeting brought yet another surprising twist to the saga of the Rockridge Business Improvement District (BID), the special assessment district that covers the length of College Avenue from Broadway to the Berkeley border.

The Rockridge District Association (RDA), the nonprofit corporation that administers the assessment funds collected from College Avenue merchants and professionals, refused to sign the agreement with the city of Oakland detailed in February's Rockridge News.

The contract renewal will come to the council again March 16, by which time the RDA should have reached agreement with the City regarding the new contract. Until then, the BID is temporarily suspended, and collected assessment funds will not be disbursed to the RDA. Since it started in 2001, the RDA has administered assessment funds of approximately $120,000 to $140,000 per year.

A financial audit requirement seems to be the sticking point. Sara Wilson, RDA President, stated in a letter to City Council President Jane Brunner: "We do not believe that the RDA should be singled out to be required to sustain an audit review outside of a coherent BID/CBD agreement."

An audit is currently permitted under the City's contract with the RDA which states the RDA "shall permit City and its authorized representatives to have access" to "books, records, accounts and any and all data relevant to this agreement, for the purpose of making an audit or examination for a period of four years following the fiscal year of the last expenditure under this agreement."

Additionally, one of the five proposed changes submitted by Brunner at the January 26 Community Economic Development Agency (CEDA) hearing was to "Require the submission of an annual CPA-reviewed financial statement to the City." The RDA would be required to pay for the audit review, a cost estimated by Brunner's staff to be $4,300.

The city of Oakland, through CEDA, has proposed a set of practices for all nine special business assessment districts that include deadlines and administrative, updating and reporting standards. The RDA has objected to aspects of the draft proposal they deem more suitable for the property-based tax districts known as Community Benefit Districts (CBDs), and will meet with Brunner and staff from her office and CEDA prior to the next renewal hearing to seek agreement.

Of the nine special business assessment districts, seven are property-based CBDs and two, Rockridge and Montclair, are business-license based.

☑ Vote: FORL Elections, April

The Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL), will hold elections for board members Thursday, April 8, at the Rockridge branch library between 7 and 9 p.m. Incumbents running for re-election are: David Brown, Karen Carlson, Kristine Caraway, Jane McDermott, and Tracy Weber. A new member running for election will be Kim Tompson Budinger.

For further information, contact co-chair of the board Carol Bieri at cbieri@pacbell.net.

















Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

Welcome to the Year of the Tiger

Gung Hay Fat Choy – happy Chinese New Year.

Did you know that Chinese fortune cookies were invented in America and are not found in China? Another tidbit: The little packets of soy sauce that accompany Chinese take-out were first produced by a New York Jewish-American owned company in the 1920s. And: Take-out containers were first used by Chinese restaurants to deliver food to Chinese families that did not have kitchens in their tenement apartments.

Over the past several months I've read three amazing books related to the cultural and gastronomic history of Chinese food in the United States: "Chop Suey: A Cultural History of Chinese Food in the USA," by Andrew Coe, "The Fortune Cookie Chronicles," by Jennifer Lee, and "Mastering the Art of Chinese Cooking," by Eileen Yin-Fei Lo. As we enter the Year of the Tiger, each of these books provides a unique perspective on the place of Chinese cuisine in the American culinary tradition.

My love for eating and preparing Chinese food goes back nearly 40 years. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than exploring Chinese markets in Oakland and San Francisco. I consider Chinese cuisine one of the three giants of world gastronomy, the others being French and Italian. After Italian food, Chinese food is the second most popular ethnic food in America. One-third of the ethnic restaurants in the U.S. are Chinese and most are family run.

As with any highly regionalized and complex cuisine, it takes years to truly master cooking Chinese food. The food of southern China from Guangzhou (Canton) was the first known in the U.S. Cantonese sauces are generally mild with a focus on the diversity of flavors and colors. Seafood, roast pork, and poultry are the main ingredients. The cornerstone of Cantonese cooking is the quick stir fry in a very hot wok to emphasize flavor and color. Eastern Chinese cooking, as found in Shanghai, emphasizes stews, braising, and soups. Shanghai cuisine tends to be sweet, with the use of vinegars similar to balsamic and cane sugar.

The provinces in western China include Sichuan and Hunan. Here the food incorporates hot chili peppers, Sichuan peppercorns and spicy bean sauces. This region is known for its hot-and-sour soup, and twice-cooked pork. Northern provinces have been influenced by China's imperial capital Beijing. Lamb, which is rarely eaten in the rest of China, is very common in the North because of the large Muslim population. Because of the large Mongol communities, communal hot-pots dominate Northern China's culinary experience.

As with most Asian cuisines, the concept of breakfast, lunch, and dinner is not a rigid affair. All dishes served at Chinese restaurants are meant to be communal: traditionally, no one would consider ordering a dish for just themselves. The dishes are consumed one by one, in turn. (Americans tend to put portions of each ordered dish on their plates and generally not eat the rice.) Chinese diners take a small amount of a single dish, place it in their rice bowl and eat it in a single helping. They would not think of putting more than one morsel in their rice bowl. Proper dining manners require that food be eaten from a small rice bowl and not from a flat plate. I would encourage a visit to Chu at 5636 College Avenue, our neighborhood's newest Chinese restaurant, to practice your dining skills.

Eileen Yin Fei Lo's "Mastering the Art of Chinese Cooking" is an invitation to deepen your understanding of the complexities of Chinese cuisine. The following recipe from her book demonstrates the simplicity and elegance of Chinese greens.

BARRY'S RECIPE

Baby Bok Choy in Oyster Sauce

(serves 4)

- 2 tablespoons oyster sauce*
- 2 tablespoons vegetable stock
- 1 teaspoon dark soy sauce*
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Pinch of salt and white pepper
- 2 pounds of baby bok choy (the smaller the better)
- 2 tablespoons canola oil

To make the sauce, combine the first 5 ingredients and reserve.

Water-blanch the bok choy in boiling water. As soon the bok choy turns a bright green (about 1 minute), turn off the heat and plunge the bok choy into ice water. Drain well.

Heat a wok over high heat for 30 seconds. Pour the sauce into the wok until it starts to bubble, then add the bok choy. Stir-fry for 2 minutes, or until the bok choy is hot and coated with the sauce. Transfer to an attractive dish and serve.

* Special ingredients for Asian cuisine are available at Yasai Market, 6301 College Avenue.

Barry Kaufman is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy. Barry is available for cooking classes or answering your culinary questions. His email is kaufman42@earthlink.net.

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Studio One: The One and Only

It's amazing to live in a neighborhood for years and never know about all the marvelous experiences it has to offer. Last week I finally got around to visiting the restored Studio One at 365-45th Street, next to the Temescal Pool. I found a wonderful cultural arts resource built for the people of Oakland but waiting lonely and forlorn for an adoring public that, so far, has failed to materialize.

The Center is a true gem. The facility, you will remember, was shut down about four years ago for retrofit and modernization. Money was supplied by Measure EE and the renovation has been first-class. The Center was re-opened almost two years ago, but still has the air of a lady-in-waiting. Community attendance has been less than overwhelming. The question is: WHY?

Karis Griffin, recreation supervisor of the Cultural Arts Division of Oakland's Parks and Recreation Department, would welcome your ideas. She has just released the center's new catalog spelling out an amazing array of spring and summer programs designed to nurture Oakland's collective body, mind and spirit. I, frankly, never knew that Oakland cared that much about me. But there it is.

They want adults to take up everything from throwing pots and fusing and slumping glass to making jewelry, learning a new language, writing poetry and doing yoga. Dance, ballet, jazz, drama, stage design and fabrication, print making, improv theater, photography — the list goes on — are all offered in age-appropriate courses to adults, teens and children. There are fabulous summer camp programs to choose from. Then there are youth counselor training classes, cooking classes, even youth sports (off-site) including baseball and track. Classes are relatively inexpensive; teachers are certified and selected with care. Parking and security is provided for evening classes. It all sounds so enticing. So, where is everybody?

To be fair, it always takes time to rebuild an audience after it has been moved elsewhere or dispersed. In a four or five-year period, much can change in a neighborhood, so perhaps constituent profiles and needs have changed. Perhaps public perception is off. The building exterior does not explain its purpose easily; it could be a school or an institute, for example. Or, is it just a matter of getting the word out to the community? If so, how do you do that when City departments don't necessarily share their resources?

Ms. Griffin, who arrived at the center only two months ago, loaded with enthusiasm, talent and energy, is very much interested in having you visit and voicing your opinions. **In fact, there will be a focus meeting held at the Center on Thursday, April 8, 7 to 8:30 p.m.; you are invited to attend.** The hope is that some of us will want to become more than just casually involved.

In the meantime, if you have not received a catalog in the mail, go to www.studioartcenter.net or stop by to pick one up. Registration for the early spring session is now in progress, so there is no time to waste.

The Center is open Monday through Saturday, closed on Sunday. A friendly staff will welcome you. Parking is available just behind the building and is accessible from both 45th Street and Shafter Avenue. The telephone number is 510/597-5027. The Web address is www.StudioOneArtCenter.net

Did I mention that they also rent out spaces for private events?

Ortrun Niesar can be reached at oniesar@sbcglobal.net.

The Rockridge Muse

by Ortrun Niesar



If Studio One offered a class in making funny faces and holding outlandish poses, this group would graduate with honors. Until that class is available, Studio One continues to offer a rich array of classes from dance to photography and more. PHOTO: STUDIO ONE

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The Rockridge News Needs Two Block Captains

by Susan Montauk, business manager

We have a couple of delivery routes available this month. We wish to thank Michael Hershey and Jeff Rabb for faithfully delivering The Rockridge News


The Rockridge News

RCPC Town Hall Meeting AGENDA March 2010

RCPC Board Candidates to Address March Meeting

Ride for a Reason: California Education

Claremont Parents Peddle Education Concerns in Sacramento

Special Notice

RCPC April Meeting Date Change

to their blocks of Chabot Road and Keith Avenue for many years. Michael is retiring and Jeff is moving away.

If you would like to serve your neighborhood by delivering to one of these routes please let us know. Refer to the route numbers (below) when you call Susan Montauk at 547-3855, or e-mail her at smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer.

01B,D Chabot Road from 7025 Marie Way and then to end of Chabot.

09H Up Keith from McMillan to 5925 Broadway.

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.

Dear Officers Chew and Gerrans:

Our NCPC has noted two sets of similar crimes occurring very close in time and style. My neighborhood blog noted another, different set of two crimes — burglaries two houses apart and a couple of weeks apart — as well. Does OPD make a point of noting similar crimes close in time and location? How can a citizen who hears of such crimes know if OPD is aware of the similarities so as not to make extra reports?

— A. Morales

Officers' Reply:

For the first question, OPD does make efforts to look at similar crimes concentrated in close proximity to each other. If the PSO sees that multiple crimes have taken place in a short period of time, the officer will research those types of crimes on that beat, or more specifically, in a block. We will look at times of occurrence, method of entry (for burglaries), MO's relating to words said for robberies or similar structures being burglarized, suspect descriptions, and number of crimes in a certain area. We use this information to help identify if a trend is occurring. This has helped the PSOs solve multiple trends that have occurred on their beats in the past.

For the second part of the question, it is important for the victims of crime to report the incident. If another person wants to make a report, we cannot take the report from that person because they are not the victim or complainant. Therefore "extra" reports cannot be made.

It is always helpful for neighbors to discuss their concerns with their NCPC because these concerns are relayed to the PSOs. This is why it is important for those who have been victims to report these crimes to OPD. We do look at the reports and we do our best to keep on top of trends occurring in their neighborhoods. But if they do not report the crime, then there is no record for us to review.





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* There is currently less than 1½ months supply of inventory in Rockridge
* The average market time in Rockridge has increased by 25%
* Both this year and last year at this time, only 1 property in Rockridge sold
* Between last year at this time and this year, there has been no change in the list to sell price

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March is 'National Music in Our Schools' Month: Join Claremont's Band and Orchestra in Celebration



The Claremont Middle School Band & Orchestra performs al fresco on College Avenue during its 2009 fundraising Play-a-Thon. The annual program is held to raises funds for travel and entry fees at band and orchestra festivals.

Photo: Mike Mages

by Julie Parker, Claremont Middle School parent

What better way to celebrate "Music" than to come to Claremont Middle School, 5750 College Avenue (across from Trader Joe's), Friday, March 19, between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m., and hear the fabulous Claremont Band and Orchestra perform 100 songs at their annual Play-a-thon. All proceeds from this fundraiser will go toward expenses for the upcoming band and orchestra festivals in May including the Music in the Parks Festival at Great America, where our advanced band took first place last year in the middle school category.

The state-wide budget cuts to public education have made us work even harder to make sure that programs like music continue to thrive at Claremont. Our dedicated Music Director Renae Briggs continues to be the driving force that brings students from all backgrounds together to experience the magic of music.

This year, each student must raise $100 to cover the cost of travel expenses and entry fees for these competitions; please drop by the school on March 19 and show your support. Donations will be happily accepted.

Ms. Briggs also invites any community member who plays an instrument to sit in and play along with our student musicians. Together we can make a difference!

Claremont 7th Graders Are Going to Yosemite

by Amy Vaughan, Claremont PTA

While bureaucrats in Sacramento cut education funding, Realtor D.J. Grubb instead came up with a way to help our beleaguered schools: a cash donation.



D.J. Grubb, president of The Grubb Company of Oakland, presents his company's donation to Claremont PTA fundraising co-chair Amy Vaughan.

Photo: Julie Parker

A check for $3,000 was given to the Claremont PTA for financial support of the 7th grade Yosemite Club so that students might climb, soar, hike, breathe, and re-invent themselves in the 8th Wonder of the World, Yosemite Valley.

Many of our students have never seen Yosemite, and some have never left Oakland. Mr. Grubb's generous donation provides seven full scholarships for our students.

Thank you, Mr. Grubb and The Grubb Company!

If you, too, would like to support efforts to send our 7th graders to Yosemite, please contact Amy Vaughan 510/658-4056 or e-mail avaughan@stmaryscenter.org

A Piece of Claremont Middle School History Awaits its More Public Venue

Claremont Middle School Gate Project



A piece of Claremont Middle School history is still on campus and languishing in an interior courtyard.

Stored in an interior part of the school when campus buildings were rebuilt in the '70s, the ornate entry gates to the original buildings have been hidden from public view for years.

Now, a group of Claremont parents and Rockridge neighbors plan to raise money to refurbish the gate and make it the new entrance to Claremont's emerging garden, located next to College Avenue. Placing this graceful architectural gem can help make the campus more attractive and enahnce the connection of the school and College Avenue.

Future articles in The Rockridge News will describe project plans and how the community can support this project. Stay tuned!

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Ride for Schools

from page 1

for a Reason: California Education." The ride is a fully supported 100-mile "bike-a-thon." In a recently released statement, ride planners told of their goals and solicited community support:

Our objectives are:

- To raise $10,000 each for academic enrichment programs at Claremont Middle School and Oakland Technical High School; and
- To help draw attention to the crisis in funding for education.

At Claremont Middle School and Oakland Technical High School, many elective classes and enrichment programs are paid for by parent and community fundraising. Our local schools need your help now, more than ever, to keep these outstanding programs alive.

How can you help? Right now, we are recruiting riders. Based on initial outreach at Claremont and Tech, we have signed up 20 riders including three teachers, a security officer and Claremont Assistant Principal Kevin Taylor. Our goal is to sign up another 30-to-40 riders, each of whom would also raise donations from sponsors. One hundred percent of the money we raise will go into enrichment programs at Claremont and Tech. To ride or to make a donation, visit our Web site: www.claremontms.org/Claremontms/RideDetails.html.

For more information, please contact Mike Mages at michaelmages@mac.com or Mike Napolitano at mikenapolitano5@gmail.com. With your support, the event is sure to be a success.

Climate Action

from page 2

will feel the impacts of rising seas, changing rainfall, and warmer temperatures, and the city has an opportunity to take the lead in responding to those problems.

Fitzgerald and Kirsch said we still have time to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reimagine an Oakland where more people get around with fewer cars; where many needs are met by local people selling local products; and where homes are more efficient and more comfortable — all while creating local jobs, especially for flatlands communities that need them most.

The audience broke into small groups to share ideas about what individuals and the city should do. Suggestions ranged from selling one's car to growing more food to simply being careful about energy use.

Transit was a big concern, especially more and better bus service across the city, from the hills to the flatlands. Other ideas included collective solar purchasing, better marketing of incentive programs, installing LED streetlights, and more.

But it wasn't all rose-colored glasses. This is going to take political will and money. The latter is in short supply, but groups ranging from labor unions to the Ella Baker Center to the Sierra Club are working to build the former. Find out more at bit.ly/eastbayclimate.

Dan Rademacher, who has lived in Rockridge since 2001, started volunteering with the Sierra Club on Oakland climate issues in 2009. He is also editor of Bay Nature magazine.

Changes on College

by Theresa Nelson

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TAI CHI and QIGONG: New Beginners in March

Thursday mornings: Beginners 9:30-10:30. Starts March 11. Saturday mornings: Beginners 9-10. Starts March 13. NO CLASS on March 6. Rockridge Church, 303 Hudson at College. For detailed directions visit www.harmonytaiji.com or phone Gail at 415/786-2469.

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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 info-fordenise@yahoo.com. See page 1 notice of joint meeting April 8 with RCPC.

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 (stories and crafts/activities)**: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7pm. Kids invited to come in pajamas.

Special Events:

- **PlayWell Tek Lego Workshop**: Learn engineering principles while you build fun Lego structures. Sat., 3/13, 2 -3pm. For kids of all ages.
- **National Library Week Book Swap and Book-Mark Making**: Bring any book you no longer want to trade (1 for 1) with others. An open, free, indoor market **for all ages**. Bring a mat or blanket to display your books. Tues., 4/13, 7pm.

FOR TEENS

- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club: Teens 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. ea. month, 5-6:30pm, upstairs meeting rm.
- **Mehendi: get free, temporary East Indian henna tattoos**. Tattoos last 1 -2 wks. **Free**. Pick up permission slip at the Library; must be signed by parent or guardian before or on the day of the event. Thurs., 4/1, 4 to 5:30pm. Info: Susy, 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). Third 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:

Gallery:
- Mar: **Bill Turner**: photographs.
- Apr: **Abba Yahuda**: paintings

Lobby Display Case:
- Mar: **MOCHA**: recycled art.
- Apr: **Nila Oaks**: photographs.

LIBRARY HOURS

Tues, 12:30 to 8pm.
Wed., Thurs. and Sat. 10am to 5:30pm.
Fri., 12 to 5:30pm.
Closed Sundays and Mondays.
Also closed: Wed., 3/31 and Tues., 4/6.

Diesel Readings and Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Mon., 3/8, 7pm. **Amnesty International Meeting** (2nd Monday each month): All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Wed., 3/10, 7pm. **Mary Gaitskill:** *Don't Cry*.
- Sun., 3/21, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Janet Holmes** and **Rusty Morrison.**
- Thurs., 4/8, 7pm. **Judith Tannenbaum**: *By Heart: Poetry, Prison, and Two Lives*, a two-person memoir she wrote with **Spoon Jackson**.

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

Chabot Elementary Spring Auction and Gala

PTA fundraiser to support enrichment programs, including music and art, garden and more. Wear cocktail attire and enjoy fine food, drinks and music. Two auctions with fabulous items: a live auction at the Gala on Mar. 20, 6:30 to 11pm, and an on-line auction beginning on Mar. 11 at 8am and ending on Mar. 18 at 10pm. Preview the auction catalog at http://auctions.readysetauction.com/chabotelementary/catalog/view. Tickets, $35 each, available now at http://auctions.readysetauction.com/chabotelementary/home. Caffe Verbena, 1111 B'way. More Inf.: Bette, 910-7165.

Oakland Tech Fundraiser

"Enjoy the World of Oakland Tech!" and support academic and arts programs, sports, college tours and more. Wear your party clothes and enjoy delicious international food, live music and entertainment and live and silent auctions. Tickets at the door $25. Saturday, Mar. 13, 6 to 10pm, at the T. Gary Rogers Rowing Center, 2999 Glascock St. (on the Oakland Estuary). More info: Barbara Vernon, 601-6694 or auction@oaklandtech.com.

Claremont Middle School Annual Play-A-Thon

Fundraiser for the Claremont Band and Orchestra
The band and orchestra will play 100 songs in front of the school in this annual fundraiser for the music students' fees and travel expenses to upcoming band and orchestra festivals. Neighbors and passers-by are invited to join in and jam with the students. **Bring your instrument and your checkbook**. Fri., Mar. 19, between 2 and 6pm at 5750 College Avenue (across from Trader Joe's). Info: Renae Briggs at renaeb@california.com. **See article and photo, page 12**.

Wisteria Ways House Concert Series

Solstice: Female a cappella ensemble specializing in music written by women or for women's voices. Songs include classical, pop, jazz, and original compositions. Hear sound clips at www.solsticesings.com/music.html. Saturday, 3/20, 8pm (door opens 7:30pm). $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door).383 61st Street (inside venue, not wheelchair accessible). For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Singers Wanted

The Distaff Singers, the Bay Area's longest-running women's choral group, is seeking new members. No auditions necessary, just ability to match pitch. Practice Tuesdays, 7:15 to 9pm at 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.

Christensen Heller Gallery

Exhibit of paintings by **Kim Bach**. Show runs 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.

Wanted: Rockridge Artists and Art Enthusiasts

Volunteer Opportunities at Pro Arts: Be part of an extraordinary team. Pro Arts provides critical access to contemporary art in Oakland and the East Bay through its independent curated exhibitions, artist services, open studios and juried programs. We are currently looking for Curatorial interns, Publicity interns, Publicity/Communications Manager, East Bay Open Studios Committee Members, and Strategic Planning Partners. Email Vicky Chen, Gallery Administrative Coordinator for details, info@proartsgallery.org or check online: www.proartsgallery.org/proarts/intern.php.

Shoe Drive For Haiti

Variety of shoes needed, from work boots to sandals for kids. Goal: to fill 2 to 3 shipping containers with shoes which will be taken to Haiti by volunteers to make sure the shoes go directly to the people. Drop off lightly used or new shoes until March 31 at REI, 1338 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. More info. at http://hupfoundation.org.

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 full schedule of classes/events and monthly lunch menu ($2.25 to $4.). Info about events, membership, and opportunities to become a volunteer: 597- 5085.

American Red Cross

- **Mobile Blood Drives: During March**, for all presenting donors, there will be **4 weekly drawings for a $100 gift certificate** which can be used toward any Red Cross Training Course or items sold in our Red Cross Shop (promotion not available at high school or college blood drives). Call 800-GIVE-LIFE (800-448-3543) or visit www.redcrossblood.org to find a location near you.
- **Volunteer Orientations**: 3/9, 3/17 and 3/23 from 6 to 8pm. Tour the Oakland Blood Center. Learn to assist blood donors, deliver blood, help with special projects and more. 6230 Claremont Avenue (across from College Ave. Safeway). To get training schedules and to sign up call Anne at 594-5165 or BlackstoneA@usa.redcross.org.

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