THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

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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
May 2010

Thursday, May 20, 2010, 7:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library
5366 College at Manila
Community Room (Upstairs)

League of Women Voters Presents Election Pros & Cons

■ **The League of Women Voters of Oakland will present the pros and cons of this June's ballot propositions at the RCPC's Town Hall meeting, Thursday, May 20. Come learn more about who is behind Props 16 and 17. Details below:**

California's statewide Direct Primary Election is on June 8, 2010. On the ballot are five propositions that will affect all Californians. The League of Women Voters of Oakland will present their neutral pros and cons of the propositions at RCPC's May meeting. The League of Women Voters (LWV) is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy. The organization does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

The LWV presenters will be Terry Kulka and Megan Chenoweth. Terry has been active with the League for almost 25 years, having served on the board of directors and various committees. She has presented pros and cons for the League for about 15 years. Megan is a senior systems librarian at Innovative Interfaces Inc., an Emeryville-based company that makes library software. Megan has been an Oakland resident since 2006 and lives in the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood. She joined the League in 2009. Both presenters are passionate about seeing that the voting public is well informed and encouraged to vote—democracy is a beautiful thing.

Come find out more about the primary election and who is behind these ballot initiatives. You'll also get a quick lesson in why you won't be voting in a local primary.

Land Use Update

FANS to Pursue Reduced Scale for Safeway Project

The city is expected to release the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a 45-day public review and comment period in June or July. The 61,000 sq. ft. project is proposed to replace the current 23,000 sq. ft. Safeway store and the "76" service station at the Claremont/College intersection.

Friends and Neighbors of College Avenue (FANS), the local community coalition challenging the project, is preparing a technical-legal-political campaign to convince Safeway and the city to scale down the project to a more appropriate size for the location. FANS can be contacted via rockridgefans@gmail.com. RCPC is a member of FANS.

The case planner handling the project

Safeway, page 3

■ ***More* Land Use Updates, page 3**

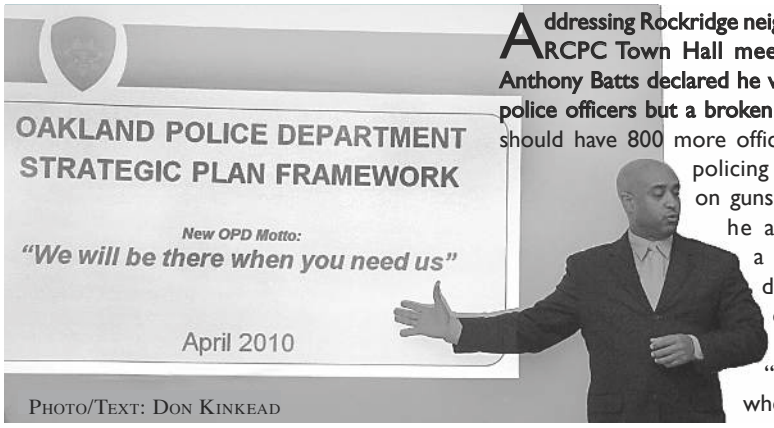
RCPC Board Transitions Into a New Term; One Vacancy Remains

by Stuart Flashman, chair, RCPC

With the end of their terms of office, three members have left the RCPC board of directors. Directors Doug Patton, Katy Taylor, and Joan Martin had each served one two-year term on the board. In addition, Joan had served as the RCPC treasurer. The three made major contributions to keeping RCPC running, and deserve all our thanks. Merchant member Jennifer Kaplan has served a year on the board and has announced her intention to leave the position. The board appreciates and will miss her contributions

RCPC Board Transitions, page 12

At the April RCPC Town Hall: OPD Chief Batts



PHOTO/TEXT: DON KINKEAD

Addressing Rockridge neighbors at the April RCPC Town Hall meeting, OPD Chief Anthony Batts declared he worked with good police officers but a broken system. "Oakland should have 800 more officers," he said. His policing emphasis will be on guns, gangs and drugs, he added. Promising a changed police department, Batts emphasized the new OPD motto: "We will be there when you need us."



Put the mettle to the pedal! Bike to Work Day, Tuesday, May 13. Hank & Frank's provides an Energizer Station. Details, page 9.

Part 1 of a 2 Part Look at AC Transit's Proposed Telegraph Avenue Bus Service

AC Transit Looks Back to Build the Future

by Don Kinkead, editor, and Stuart Flashman, chair, RCPC

It is often said that "The more things change, the more they remain the same." With its plan to install bus-only lanes and mid-street boarding pads along the 1 and 1R bus lines from San Leandro through Downtown Oakland to Berkeley, AC Transit seeks to recreate the fixed track format of the Key System rail network displaced in the 1950s and 1960s by "more flexible" buses. It is also said, "You can't go home again." That may be the epitaph for AC Transit's "bus rapid transit" (BRT) proposal.

From Downtown Oakland, the line will travel along Telegraph Avenue to Berkeley. Nowadays, growth along that corridor and at UC Berkeley, and with more traffic along Highway 24 and through the Caldecott Tunnel funneling more cars daily in and out of Oakland, Telegraph is choked with traffic the fixed rail systems never faced.

Oakland has created a BRT Web site that describes the project as:

"…an East Bay Bus Rapid Transit Project that would extend through San Leandro, Oakland, and Berkeley.... a set of improvements to bus service, which makes the bus run like a light rail or street car without the need to install rails." Benefits cited include a "dedicated lane in most locations: The bus gets its own lane so no more waiting in traffic on the bus."

The "dedicated lane in most locations" is the most controversial element to the communities. Buses would travel down International Boulevard and Telegraph Avenue in routes dedicated for buses. The channels would cut off most intersecting side streets, causing cars to search for unobstructed crossings. Oakland's plans also call for adding bicycle lanes along Telegraph, eliminating many on-street parking spaces. Many merchants in the three cities believe the loss of parking will lead to a loss of business and potential financial ruin.

Oakland staff and consultants reworked AC Transit's initial plans, attempting to remove the most onerous features. Still, the staff-generated "Local Preferred Alternative" created fireworks when presented by AC Transit and city agencies in public meetings.

In April, the council's Public Works Committee directed staff to study the project without the dedicated lanes, and the effect upon fares and currrent bus stops. Without the dedicated lanes, the project is known as the Rapid Bus Plus alternative.

At an April council meeting, staff recommended its BRT proposal, not Rapid Bus Plus, arguing that AC Transit would then provide a "worst case" projection, and the city could then choose how much of the BRT project to accept.

In the audience, East Oakland seniors complained that BRT would destroy their transit mobility. Temescal Merchants fumed that the loss of parking would decimate their commercial area. Residents, as well as RCPC, warned that BRT would create "cut-through" traffic on residential streets with disruptive consequences. RCPC chair Flashman urged the Council to ask AC Transit to consider Rapid Bus Plus, as well as staff's BRT proposal.

A sizeable delegation from the pro-transit group TRANSFORM called for the Council to move forward with the full BRT proposal.

Next month: Part 2: The Cities Respond

More information:

Oakland BRT Web site: http://www.oaklandnet.com/government/ceda/dcsd_ts_brt.asp

Be involved. Call or write District 1 Council Member Jane Brunner: Phone: 510/238-7001; Email: jbrunner@oaklandnet.com

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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***?
- Do you have questions about newsletter distribution?
- Want to volunteer to be a ***Rockridge News*** block captain?
- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

Contact us at one of the following:
Editor: editor@rockridge.org
www.rockridge.org
The Rockridge News, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94618
RCPC Voicemail: 510/869-4200

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

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING/DEADLINES
Publication date of the next issue is
☛ June 5, 2010
☛ June deadline is May 20, 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.)*

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 online at www.oaklandnet.com.

5833 College Avenue

Proposal: To construct a new 904 sq. ft. second story at an existing 1,165 sq. ft. one-family residentioal dwelling.

Applicant: Rebecca Amato, Amato Architecture

Phone: 510/420-0210

Owners: Mark Martin & Katie Broughton

Planning Permits Required: Regular Design Review for additions to an existing dwelling; Minor Variance to locate the addition: (a) 2'-6" from the corner side property line (Taft Ave. side), whereas a 5' minimum setback is required, and (b) 13'-4" from the front property line (Mendocino Ave. frontage) whereas 20' minimum setback is required. (Note: The Minor Variance would, in effect, allow the addition to be constructed over existing nonconforming building walls)

Case Planner: Ann Clevenger at 510/238-6980 or aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Safeway

from page 1

is Peterson Vollman (238-6167, pvollman@oaklandnet.com).

Stay up to date on this project's developments: Visit the RCPC Web site at www.rockridge.org regularly, and sign up for the RCPC E-News for updates at the site. Click "Join Email List" on the opening page.

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RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Next meeting: May 26. Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room: 7:30 p.m.

Land Use Update

by Stuart Flashman, RCPC Land Use Committee chair

■ Committee Positions Available; You Can Help

The RCPC Land Use Committee has two openings available. If you're interested in learning about and helping to address land use and development issues in Rockridge, you are invited to submit an application by writing a short letter indicating why you're interested in being on the committee and your basic information—name, address, and contact info. While it's helpful if you have some experience in land use issues and can read blueprints, the most important factor is an interest and concern about how Oakland's development decisions affect Rockridge. Send your letter to RCPC, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, 94618, or via e-mail to chair@rockridge.org.

■ Rockridge Montessori School (6516 Broadway)

This project, stalled while the applicant addressed traffic and parking concerns raised by RCPC and local neighbors, is apparently about to move forward. A traffic engineering firm retained by the school has issued a report indicating that the expansion project, which will increase the school's enrollment to just over 200 students, will not cause significant traffic or parking problems. RCPC continues to have questions about the report, which it will seek to resolve informally. The Oakland planner handling the case is Ulla Britt-Jonsson (238-3322, ujonsson@oaklandnet.com).

■ Rockridge Shopping Center (Corner of Broadway and Pleasant Valley)

Safeway's plans to remodel and enlarge this important commercial center were panned by both the community and the Oakland Planning Commission. (Safeway does not own the site, but is the master tenant and has been given control of the remodeling project.) Safeway has now revamped its plans and hired Larry Tramatola, a well-known local political consultant, to bring them forward to the community. RCPC is discussing a joint presentation for the Rockridge, Temescal, and Piedmont Avenue communities, all of which use the center heavily. We hope this will initiate a productive dialog that will lead to a project the community can be proud of.

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.

■ Dreyer's Building (5915 College Avenue)

The new tenant for the key corner retail space is Crossroads Trading, moving from its smaller location on College near BART. The other ground floor space in the Dreyer's building is also being leased, but the tenant has not been publicly named. With these two new tenants, the ground floor will again be fully occupied with retail tenants. Also, several other recently vacant College Avenue storefronts have been leased and are being renovated for new tenants. Perhaps College Avenue has turned the corner on the recession.

■ College Avenue Sidewalk Signage ("sandwich boards")

Last month's request in The Rockridge News for comments on the proliferation of "sandwich board" signs on College Avenue sidewalks garnered a variety of responses, with no consensus about whether the signs are a problem.

Several merchants said no regulation was needed and the current prohibition should be rescinded. A few residents agreed.

At the other extreme, some residents felt the signs were obtrusive and interfered with sidewalk traffic and that the prohibition should stand.

In the middle were those who appreciated the signs' beneficial information, but felt regulation was needed to keep their quality high and prevent sidewalk obstruction.

The comments (without submitters' identities) are being forwarded to Council President Jane Brunner's office for her consideration.

Thanks to all who gave their opinions.

Support Local Merchants

Stroll the Avenue (and side streets) in this beautiful spring weather.

Shop Rockridge!

Peralta School Yard Sale — a Community Success Story

by Nicole Aruda, Peralta parent

The Lower Rockridge Parents Group (LRPG) held their annual Community Yard & Bake Sale in April to benefit Peralta Elementary School, and raised over $5,000, a new record for the community event first held in 2002. One hundred per cent of the proceeds go directly to Peralta, an Oakland public school recently designated a "Title I Achievement School" and "2010 California Distinguished School."

On sale day, neighbors joined Peralta parents, transferring four basements full of donated items to the Peralta campus, where another team of helpers sorted and set up the sale. The sale was staffed by past and current Peralta families, along with neighbors who hope to have their children attend Peralta in future years. Peralta families donated baked goods and fresh coffee; St. Augustine Church donated the use of their parking lot.

LRPG thanks all those community members who donated items, storage space, time and money to support Peralta, a school that enriches this community and exemplifies all that is wonderful about Oakland.



Attendees at the Peralta School sale found good eats and good deals on sale day. Photo: Sandi Matthews

For more information about Lower Rockridge Parents Group or to sign up for the Lower Rockridge Parents Group listserv, email lowerrockridgeparents@yahoo.com.

Neighborhood Preschool Options Serve Rockridge Well

by Jennifer Edmister, Rockridge resident and parent of a preschool-aged child

As spring arrives, many parents continue their search for the "right" preschool. That is, a preschool with the right hours, the right philosophy, and now, more than ever, the right price. For families already looking ahead to their options for kindergarten, elementary school, and maybe even middle school, the stakes for finding the right preschool can seem quite high.

Preschool-surviving families, however, urge us to keep perspective: there is enough quality pre-kindergarten education to go around, particularly if families broaden their searches and consider a variety of options.

Holly Gold, director of Rockridge Little School, celebrating five years on College Avenue, has more than 15 years of experience in early childhood education. She advises parents to visit schools with open minds and to act on what they love about a school, rather than out of anxiety about a preconceived ideal. "In the end, everyone finds something they love," she assures us, "with a cost that is manageable."

In Rockridge alone, there are at least a dozen preschools. Scan our sidewalks between 8 and 10 a.m., and you'll see nearly 400 children who have bundled up, grabbed their bags and are headed to preschool in Rockridge each day.

Pre-kindergarten comes in all shapes and sizes, from home-based programs to traditional schoolyards. Our cache of choices in Rockridge includes (but is not limited to): The ABCs and 123s Academy on Claremont; Claremont Day Nursery on College; Duck Soup Family Playschool on Bryant; Escuela Bilingue Internacional on Alcatraz; Giggles on Colby; Home Away From Home on Birch Court; Little Elephant Montessori on Miles; My Own Montessori on Oak Grove; the Rainbow School on Taft; Rockridge Little School on College; Rockridge Montessori School on Broadway; and the School of Arts and Sciences Preschool on Broadway.



If you, or someone you know, is in the market for a preschool, take heart. Investigate options off the beaten path. Be persistent. Be patient. While a number of preschools have completed their first round admissions, almost all schools will have unanticipated openings this summer, and year-round. It's not easy, but thanks to the many early childhood professionals who are working hard to serve our families right here in Rockridge, finding the "right" preschool is possible.

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City Council Proposes to Ease Cabaret Licenses — More Live Music on College?

by Stuart Flashman, Chair, RCPC

The Oakland City Council, on the initiative of council members Nadel, Quan, and Kaplan, is considering amending the city's cabaret license ordinance to reduce the range of businesses requiring a license. The justification for the change is that the cost and hassle of obtaining a license deters clubs, galleries and restaurants from offering live music, and that, in turn, detracts from the vibrancy of Oakland's nightlife.

Under Oakland's current ordinance, any commercial establishment wanting to offer live music or dancing must obtain a cabaret license at a cost of several thousand dollars. The ordinance doesn't distinguish between amplified and acoustic music, nor does it consider whether alcohol is served or the establishment's size or hours of operation. Consequently, few smaller venues apply for a cabaret license. Nightclubs such as Yoshi's and venues like the Paramount Theater find it worthwhile to obtain a license; a restaurant on College Avenue wanting live music on weekends probably would not.



The proposed revisions would limit the permit requirement to businesses charging admission or those where alcohol is served and the business stays open after midnight. The revisions would also establish a "small cabaret" regulatory program separate from the regular license that would have lower fees and less regulation for businesses with a capacity of less than 50 patrons.

Under the revised ordinance, many Rockridge businesses would not need any extra license to offer live music, and almost all would fall under the "small cabaret" program.

At the Council's first reading of the ordinance on April 20, RCPC and the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL) raised concerns about past problems with live entertainment. Council President Jane Brunner also worried about how noise and other nuisance problems would be addressed if businesses no longer needed cabaret licenses.

Arturo Sanchez, in charge of the city's nuisance abatement program in the city manager's office, indicated that any business with an alcoholic beverage license could still be regulated under that license. He also noted that citizens would still have recourse to the city's nuisance abatement program. (See box, below left.) The council unanimously passed the ordinance on first reading.

City Offers Nuisance Abatement Solutions

The most effective way to deal with a business nuisance problem is through the nuisance abatement program in the city manager's office. Contact Program administrator Arturo Sanchez (238-7542, e-mail asanchez@oaklandnet.com) to discuss concerns about nearby businesses.

Watch for more information on the array of nuisance abatement options in the June issue.

Progess: Permit Parking Audit

by Jon Gabel, RCPC boardmember

Responding to a request for public information on the Residential Permit Parking Program (RPP), Assistant City Auditor Yiaway Yeh and Deputy City Auditor II Melanie Nuni met with RCPC board member Jon Gabel and Don Kinkead, editor of The Rockridge News. The Auditor's Office supplied a number of documents used to prepare the Interim Performance Audit Report on the RPP Program that was released last May. As previously reported in The Rockridge News, this Interim Report did not contain the actual cost of the RPP Program.

The good news is that the Final Performance Audit Report, mandated by the City Council 1-1/2 years ago, has been completed and is under review by the Parking Division. It should be available to the public soon. However, the documents reviewed by Gabel and Kinkead indicate the dearth of actual data regarding the costs and revenues of the RPP Program. This lack of data appears to be a severe impediment to making knowledgeable decisions regarding enforcement, as well as for setting the cost of permits.

Gabel and Kinkead also met with Nocoasha Henry, Administrative Analyst II. Henry allowed them to examine a copy of the request for proposal (RFP) for the "Citation Administration and Revenue Reconcilliation System" (CARRS), as well as two bids for this system. When implemented, CARRS will handle the entire range of parking citation functions from handheld units used in the field by parking enforcement officers to violators paying by phone or on-line. CARRS will also handle RPP permit applications and will tie in to the DMV database to verify addresses. CARRS can be queried for information about RPP. This should allow the true costs of the RPP program to be obtained.

CARRS will also provide the capability of flagging unpaid citations when residents apply for permits or renewals.

The current system of buying an RPP bumper sticker annually will change. A barcoded placard which will last at least three years will replace the stickers. Placards will be color coded by area. Enforcement officers will be able to check the bar code to verify renewal fees have been paid.

Two bids for CARRS were received by the city in September 2009. They were from ACS State & Local Solutions, Germantown, MD, and Duncan, Milwaukee, WI. Both companies provide the services required under Oakland's RFP, and both companies already provide similar services in large US cities. For example, ACS handles San Francisco's citations and Boston's permit parking. Both bids show schedules of fees for each type of transaction (such as processing parking citations). The ACS bid estimates the total cost of the contract to the City of Oakland over 3 years to be $2.6 million. According to Oakland's RFP, the contract for CARRS was scheduled to be signed in November 2009. So far, this has not happened. The Council would first have to approve this contract.

Parking Division head Noel Pinto has not responded to a request for public information on the RPP Program. The Rockridge News will continue to publish information on this subject.

Coming Up: Bay Area Storytelling Festival

Make a Note of It

The 25th Anniversary Bay Area Storytelling Festival takes place at Kennedy Grove Regional Recreational Area in El Sobrante on Saturday and Sunday, May 22-23.

Rockridge will be well represented. Along with Gay Ducey, who we have admired for her many years of delightful storytelling at the Rockridge Branch Library, Diane Ferlatte will join the impressive gathering of world-class story tellers. Aficionados like me will hang around to be enchanted, to catch a little magic dust to bring back into our everyday world.

Diane Ferlatte

Diane Ferlatte, performing both Saturday and Sunday, lives with husband Tom and family on Ocean View Drive in a beautiful brown shingle Craftsman house. But she is hardly home; she travels all over the world plying her trade as a professional storyteller.

If you have not heard Diane perform, you are in for a treat. She is funny and serious at the same time, warm and engaging, a veritable pied piper who, before you realize it, can get you to follow her into far away worlds, past, present or future, worlds full of fancy and truth at the same time. She speaks with such authority that you could hardly doubt the authenticity of her characters and the tales she tells accompanied by song and her famous thumping stick. To get acquainted with her work, go to www.dianeferlatte.com. Or catch a glimpse of her on YouTube.

The Art of the Storyteller

I asked Diane how she came to be such an accomplished storyteller, where she gets her stories, what it takes to conjure up that true voice that is so important. Diane says oral tradition was just part of the African American culture she grew up in. She was born in Louisiana where language flows like honey, like the slow moving waters of the Mississippi. On warm summer nights, on Sundays and holidays, everyone would gather on the

THE ROCKRIDGE MUSE

by Ortrun Niesar

Diane Ferlatte, Story Teller



front porch and pretty soon a story would emerge amidst all the laughter and gossip being bandied about. I would imagine there was competition going on among the tellers. There was no TV to distract anyone. A tale could be made up of just about anything, of snippets of something somebody heard or saw, of ghosts and monsters, of ancestor stories, painful or happy. And as the stories were told, you could literally watch them come alive right in front of your eyes, the teller's voice and body language tugging mightily on your imagination and emotions.

Storytelling, Diane reminds me, is an oral tradition, very different from reading in its purpose and delivery. Talking—telling– requires eye contact, meeting someone face to face, interacting.

Diane knows that her work is not only entertaining but therapeutic as well. Instead of solitude and isolation, it encourages community. In our modern society it is a powerful antidote against the suffocating hi-tech cocoon we are mindlessly spinning for ourselves.

25th Anniversary Festival Information

This is a family affair, so bring the kids. Take a picnic and a blanket and spend a day in the outdoors under the trees, listening to and learning from wonderful performers. There will be workshops, puppet shows, music and games, kids' concerts, Celtic bagpipes, gospel music and group sings. Picnic suppers conclude the program each night. Food vendors will be on hand as well. If it rains, the event will be held in tents.

For tickets and more information, go to www.bayareastorytelling.org or call 510/869-4946. The festival is supported by the East Bay Regional Park District, an incredible resource we have in our very own backyard.

Ortrun Niesar can be reached at oniesar@sbcglobal.net. Or by calling 510/326-2161.

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Music at BART On a Sunny Day

by Joan Martin

On a recent sunny and warm day, as I walked to Market Hall for a 9 a.m. meeting, I heard lovely piano music flowing from the BART station. A couple of twenty-something young men told me they were unemployed UC Berkeley grads and they were getting desperate to pay their rent.

Instead of playing their instruments inside all day as they waited for their job applications to be (un)answered, these creative souls used a City CarShare account to haul a friend's piano to the BART station at 5:30 a.m. to play for patrons. This was their second time (first was at MacArthur BART station) and, as John Steven Morgan said, "I think I'll be able to pay my rent. Things are looking up."



PHOTO: JOAN MARTIN

John Steven Morgan, left, and John Thatcher "Thatch" Boomer, far right, both play piano and switch off to give each other a rest. On this day, Raymond Young joined in on sax. What a lovely moment — nice young guys with music in their hearts and minds and now sharing it with everyone.

To contact them for a gig, e-mail jsmorgan87@yahoo.com.

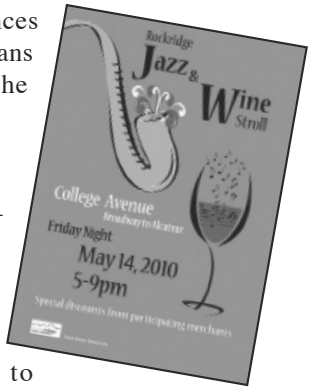
RDA Plans Rockridge JAZZ & WINE Stroll

by Chris Jackson, RDA operations manager

Spring is here, and Rockridge is looking forward to extended daylight hours and beautiful, warm evenings. Interesting, one-of-a-kind shops make it a great commercial and retail area nestled in a beautiful residential neighborhood; warm evenings make it easy to get out of the house to stroll and shop on College Avenue.

On Friday evening, May 14, 5 to 9 p.m., Rockridge merchants will host the first ever "Rockridge JAZZ and WINE Stroll" on College Avenue, sponsored by the Rockridge District Association (RDA).

Come on your own, bring your pet, bring your family, or bring your friends. Shop, stroll, dine, and visit as you join us for an evening on College Avenue. The many participating merchants will be serving wine, or wine and refreshments during live, musical performances by jazz musicians in and near the businesses. The Avenue has so much to offer, take this special occasion to enjoy it.



Merchants are sharing this evening to spread the word, "Think Globally, Shop Locally!" As an added bonus, on this night only, many merchants will be offering special discounts.

Also, mark your calendar: RDA's big "Out and About" street festival is set for Sunday, September 26, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. See you on the Avenue!

Congratulations, Chabot and Peralta!

Chabot and Peralta Elementary schools are among four Oakland schools to have received one of the state's most prestigious education honors, the 2010 California Distinguished School Award, given to "the state's most exemplary and inspiring schools." Chabot, Montclair, Peralta and Thornhill share the honor with just 480 of the state's more than five thousand elementary schools, according to news from the Oakland Unified School District.

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Rockridge Branch Library to Double DVD Collection With Community's Help

Follow our progress on FACEBOOK through the GROUP, *Rockridge Community Planning Council.*

by Annette Floystrup RCPC board

When Rockridge resident and RCPC board member Jon Gabel learned that Videots, the specialty video rental store in Berkeley's Elmwood district, was closing and selling its stock of 10,000 DVDs, he immediately realized the potential benefit for the Rockridge Branch Library.



Oakland Public Library staff work hard at sorting DVDs. They are, from left, Gay Ducey, Susy Moorhead, Eve Buckner, and Randy McDevitt-Parks. PHOTO: JON GABEL

Videots, long a movie buff's paradise, has been known in the Bay Area for its remarkable selection of American and foreign movie classics from the silent movie era forward, documentaries, US and British television series, music performances and more. Gabel realized the addition of appropriate selections of Videots' DVD collection to the Rockridge Library would attract more patrons and expand circulation.

DVDs are the most popular circulating item in the Rockridge Library, with just over half checked out at any given time. 2,877 DVD titles await cataloging and security cases so they can be added to the 2,800 DVDs currently in the Rockridge Branch Library collection.

Gabel approached Videots owner John Huffman about selling a portion of its DVD stock at a sharp discount to benefit the Rockridge Library. Huffman, a lifelong fan of both libraries and movies, readily agreed.

Working with RCPC board member Annette Floystrup, Gabel next enlisted the support of the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) board of directors and City Council President Jane Brunner's office, with aides Nila Kim and Maria Barra-Gibson facilitating a relationship between what was now called the Rockridge DVD Project and library administrators.

Oakland Public Library (OPL) administration was supportive from the outset with Associate Director Gerry Garzon giving the project solid backing. Garzon also lent the services and expertise of Collection Management Librarian Randy McDevitt-Parks and offered use of OPL bar scanning equipment to assist in creating a database of the selected DVDs.

Meanwhile, Gabel and his wife, Ligaya Yadao, worked with local actor and Videots employee David Hern to select the DVDs that would augment the Rockridge Library collection. Head Librarian Pat Lichter allocated additional shelf space, and lent Rockridge librarians Gay Ducey, Susy Moorhead and Eve Buckner to the project. Together with McDevitt-Parks, they sorted through the DVDs, culling duplicates and unsuitable titles, selecting 2,877 discs for the branch.

Much of the work to secure the DVDs for the branch was done by volunteer labor and library staff time, but about $32,000 is needed to place the DVDs on the branch's shelves, ready for circulation. To secure the DVDs before Videots closed, RCPC lent the project $13,000 to purchase the selected discs at $4 each. Cataloging costs and a security case will total approximately $7 per disc, although some DVDs will be cased as pairs because they are television series, reducing costs.

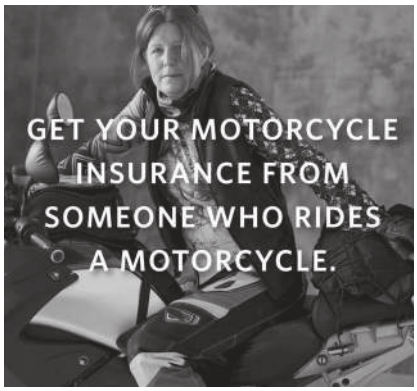
Next month, Gabel and Floystrup, with the sponsorship of RCPC, will launch a fundraising campaign to recoup purchase and final shelving costs of the new collection. Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) are kicking off the $32,000 fundraising effort with a $500 donation toward the purchase of security cases.

Watch for the coming fundraising campaign to learn how you, too, can help.

Jon Gabel contributed to this article

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Tips: Bike to Work Day

by Ronnie Spitzer, RCPC board member

Join cyclists from around the Bay Area and ride your bike to work! The San Francisco Bay Area's 16th annual Bike to Work Day (BTWD) is Thursday, May 13, as part of National Bike Month. For more information, see http://btwd.bayareabikes.org/ and Oakland's BTW Day Web site: http://www.oaklandpw.com/page125.aspx

Bike Commute Tips

- Check out your route in advance.
- Make sure your bike is well tuned and your helmet fits.
- Wear comfortable clothing.
- Obey all traffic laws including stop signs and traffic lights.
- Ride predictably, visibly and safely.
- Get an early start.

If your ride includes BART, check BART's Web site at www.bart.gov/guide/bikes/bikeRules.aspx for bike rules, especially for morning and evening commute hours. Also, AC Transit bus bike racks may be fuller than usual on Bike to Work Day; plan extra time.



Rockridge Refreshes Bike to Work Riders

Hank and Frank Bicycles is sponsoring an "energizer station" at the Rockridge BART station from 7 to 9 a.m., May 13, Bike to Work Day. Those who work in downtown Oakland can also participate in the **Bike Away From Work Party** in the Uptown area of Oakland, from 16th to 18th Streets along Telegraph Avenue. There'll be lots of exhibits and shows, as well as food and drink (please don't drink and drive—even if it is a bike). Sponsored by the East Bay Bicycle Coalition and the East Bay Express.

Bicycle Coalition Offers Bike Safety Classes



Free East Bay Bicycle Coalition urban bicycle safety classes are offered in May and June to teach cyclists how to safely share the road. Sign up at: www.ebbc.org/safety.

Visit the Oakland Public Works Agency's Bike to Work Day Web page: www.oaklandpw.com/page125.aspx.

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4/9/2010	3	1	4520 Harbord Drive	$685,000	$685,000	9	$701,000
4/14/2010	2	1.5	6201 Auburn Avenue	$819,000	$819,000	16	$870,000
4/15/2010	3	1	502 Forest Street	$699,000	$699,000	13	$762,000
4/16/2010	2	2	5327 Lawton Avenue	$665,000	$645,000	49	$625,000
4/16/2010	2	2	5234 Miles Avenue	$499,000	$499,000	13	$507,000
4/20/2010	2	1	5360 Locksley Avenue	$699,000	$699,000	0	$699,000

* Average market time in Rockridge has decreased by nearly 14% from a year ago
* 71% of listings sold in Rockridge in the last 30 days sold for over asking price
* Rockridge currently has less than 1 month supply of inventory
* Between last year at this time and this year, there has been a 3% increase in the list to sell price

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Photo: Don Kinkead

The Neighborhood Merchant

by Theresa Nelson

Rent a Fabulous Dress for Just a Weekend?

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hello@dress.com www.dress-sf.com
Tuesday—Saturday 11 a.m.—7 p.m.,
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Owner: JaiHonna German

Ever wish you could get a terrific dress for a special event, an auction, a wedding, or anniversary? Well, now you can rent—yes, rent—incredible designer dresses for a fraction of the price to buy. And, with the selection you'll find at Dress: Luxury Attire on Loan, you'll never wear the same dress twice and you'll look amazing for less than the price of a pair of strappy sandals.



Showing Her Style:
Luxury Attire on Loan
Owner JaiHonna German

Owner JaiHonna German said that, to her knowledge, there's no one else in the Bay Area leasing high-end special occasion dresses. Judging by the number of women who came to the store on a recent Saturday, there is a demand for ways to look terrific on a budget.

About half the available dresses are dressy cocktail length (or shorter), and the rest are floor length, some with trains, for more formal occasions. As JaiHonna noted, "If men can rent a tuxedo, why can't women rent a formal dress?" A great question, and thanks to Dress: Luxury Attire on Loan, now you can.

Women visiting the shop browse the two longs racks lining the walls. One rack is mostly black dresses with some white or cream. The other is a riot of color—from bright yellows, subtle corals and fiery reds to deep burgundies, cerulean blues and leaf greens. The client can bring her own favorite special occasion shoes, and JaiHonna has rows of sparkly gold sandals to wear while trying on dresses. Most women select 6-8 dresses to try on, narrow it down to favorites, sometimes returning later with a friend, partner or relative to make the final selection. The chosen dress is then reserved with a short contract.

What kinds of dresses are available? Stunning designs from top names: Carolina Herrera, Marchesa, Vera Wang, Carmen Marc Valvo, Tadashi Shoji, Monique Lhullier, Badgley Mischka, Sue Wong, and one-of-a-kind vintage wear, including some that look straight out of "Mad Men" or a James Bond film. Weekend rentals range from $65–$400, including cleaning. Sizes range from 0–14, with some size 16s coming in the fall. Since some of these dresses retail for thousands of dollars, it's an exceptional value. If a wedding party wants to lease dresses, there is a 10 per cent discount for the group. And more than a few women have leased a dress for a city hall wedding.

To help in making a selection, JaiHonna

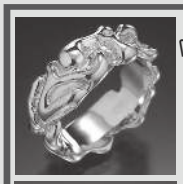
Neighborhood Merchant, page 11

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Neighborhood Merchant

from page 10

says, "I ask a lot of questions: Will you be mostly sitting or dancing? Will you be dancing in a club or at a formal dinner? How much are you willing to handle a train? Do you want to look sexy or subdued?" Often women have concerns about certain parts of their bodies, and JaiHonna sees her role as providing honest feedback, helping clients select the most flattering dress and making them feel comfortable. She helps style the whole look for clients including bags, wraps and jewelry, which are for sale. She collaborates with College Avenue retailer Iniam to offer a selection of well-priced jewelry, dangly earrings, necklaces, rings and bracelets of the type that complement the dresses, and pashminas in a variety of colors. She also offers shapewear of various types for sale, including a selection of Spanx. Dressy bags in gold, silver, pearly gray and colors are also available for lease with a dress.

JaiHonna left Levi's after a number of years, and her background gave her the skills to develop the concept for the business. A friend was attending President Obama's inauguration in January 2009, needed different dresses for several events, and ended up renting a few dresses at shops on the East Coast. JaiHonna realized there might be a market for this service in the Bay Area, developed a business plan, found the space on College Avenue, and opened in November 2009.

The shop is warm and inviting, with enormous wood-framed mirrors so you can see a dress from every angle. The rear wall features a large painting of a long yellow dress, by JaiHonna's friend Karen McClinchy, who also did the logo for the store. A central seating area provides a place for friends and family to relax while you try on dresses and accessories, as two women did the day I visited.

JaiHonna selects dresses to fit a variety of needs: professionals attending a black-tie business event, the woman who wants to look great for a gala, auction, charitable or political function, young women beginning their careers attending a first evening business function, and, of course, anyone attending a wedding or in the wedding party itself. Most important, the dresses are selected to fit and flatter real women's bodies and shapes.

Delivery & Bundling Opportunities for *The Rockridge News*

Many thanks to Lucia Gill who will soon be moving to Boston. Lucia has been helping bundle the papers each month for the last year as well as serving as both a district captain and a block captain. We'll miss her. Please consider signing on to deliver The Rockridge News or joining us at the bundling party from 4-5:30 p.m., first Friday of each month. When you call or e-mail, please refer to the route number you would like to work with. Call 547-3855 or email smontauk@gmail.com to volunteer.

Route # Description

21N,O Block Captain: Both sides of 6300 Hillegass then along Alcatraz, odd numbers from Colby to College

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07 District Captain: 6 bundle drops on blocks off Broadway


The Rockridge News

AGENDA

Land Use Update
FANS to Pursue Reduced Scale for Safeway Project

RCPC Board Transitions Into a New Term; One Vacancy Remains

At the April RCPC Town Hall: OPD Chief Batts

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RCPC Board in Transition

from page 1

to the organization.

Voting at the April 8 RCPC annual meeting and the following Saturday, Rockridge residents re-elected current board members Annette Floystrup (29 votes), Jon Gabel (27 votes), and Stuart Flashman (28 votes), and newly elected Melinda Frey (36 votes) and Chris Walters (27 votes). Chris and Melinda are attorneys, although Melinda is not practicing. Melinda's interest is public safety issues, while Chris is interested in land use issues. RCPC welcomes its two new board members.

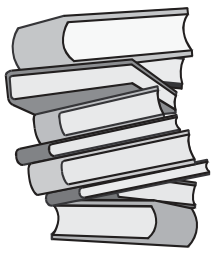
The board later elected the following set of officers: chair—Stuart Flashman; vice-chair—Andrew Charman; treasurer—Cesar Angobaldo; secretary—Michael Kan. Current committee chairs and liaisons were confirmed for reappointment.

The elected member and the merchant member vacancies will be filled by the board at its June meeting. If you are interested in serving on the RCPC board, submit a short (150 words or less) statement of interest by either mail or e-mail. All statements of interest must be received by May 31.

Send your letter to RCPC, 5245 College Avenue, PMB 311, Oakland, 94618, or via e-mail to chair@rockridge.org.

Results of FORL Board Election

On April 8, the Friends of the Rockridge Library (FORL) held its election for members of the FORL board concurrent with the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) annual meeting and the RCPC board elections. David Brown, Karen Carlson, Jane McDermott, Kristine Carraway, and Tracy Weber, incumbents, and Kim Budinger, a new member, were elected for two-year terms of office. The board looks forward to providing continued support to the Rockridge branch of the public library.



Frank Castro Elected NCPC Chair

In one of three community organization elections held during the April joint NCPC-RCPC Town Hall meeting, Frank Castro, acting chair of the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) up to the time of the election, was the only candidate for the chair's position and was unanimously acclaimed chair by those voting.

Prior to the election, Castro had submitted the following statement to The Rockridge News about his involvement in the NCPC:

"Last September I noticed an e-mail about an NCPC meeting taking place at the Rockridge Library to discuss reducing crime in Rockridge. When I showed up at the meeting, I thought to myself, 'Why are all these cops here?'

"This was my first exposure to the great job the Greater Rockridge NCPC, in partnership with the Oakland Police Department, does to help my fellow Rockridge residents solve crime and public safety issues. I was so impressed that I volunteered to serve as vice-chair. Four short months later, Chris Jackson stepped down as chair and I assumed the position on an acting basis.

"My main focus now is to increase the number of Rockridge residents that attend these meetings. There is a wealth of knowledge presented at the meetings, ranging from crime statistics to reports from our Problem Solving Officers to special speakers on various subjects.



"I strongly believe that an 'informed neighborhood' is a safer neighborhood. I have lived in Rockridge for over eight years and feel a certain pride in doing what I can to help keep our neighborhood safe."



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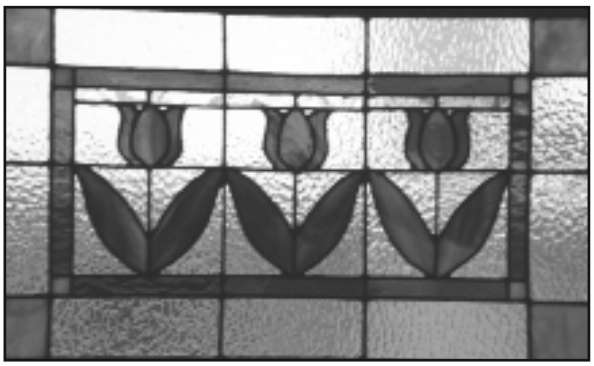


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Stained Glass in Rockridge

by Bill Kaufner, RCPC, board member

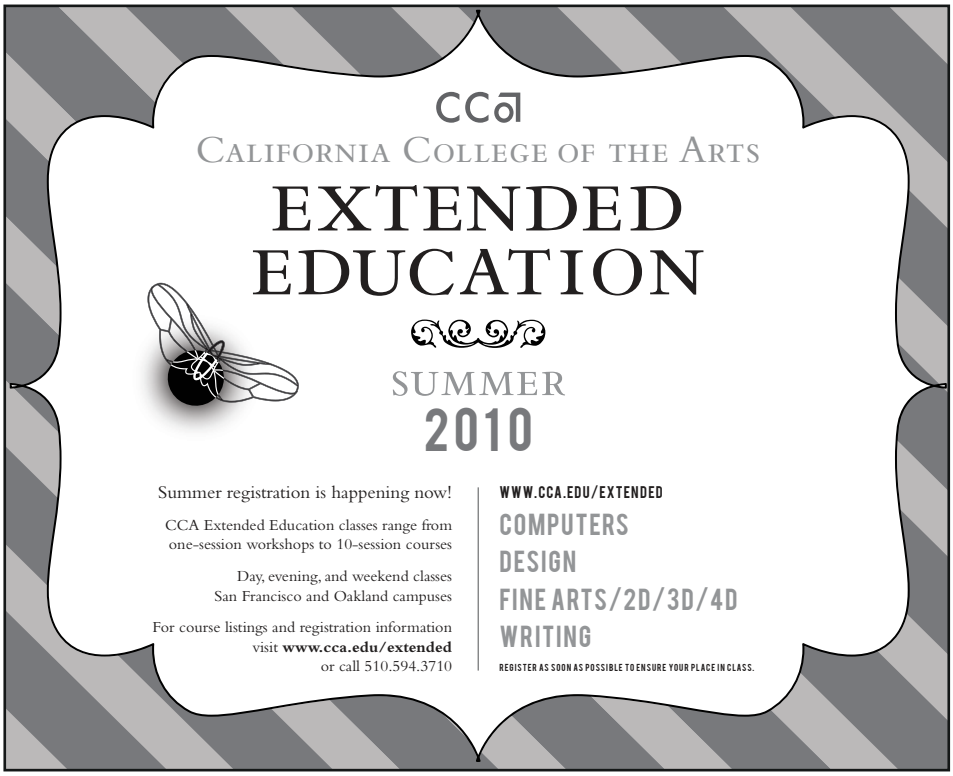
When you think of stained glass, you might think of Tiffany lamps, church windows, or hanging panels in friends' windows. If you take a slow walk among Rockridge homes on either side of College Avenue, you should find a number of homes with small stained glass windows or doors. The windows are often set on either side of the external brick of the fireplace with botanical themes reflecting the Arts and Crafts heritage. Tulips predominate, although more contemporary floral and arboreal depictions are in evidence. Another theme to be found is nautical, with images of sailboats and steamships. Most interesting are windows of Dutch windmills and canal boats on a home on Taft Avenue.



Most of our neighborhood's stained glass appears to be original construction. There are also window-inset stained glass panels of more recent vintage in windows and doors. So take some time to see our local glass heritage. Think about adding a window or door panel that will bring a multi-hued color array and a bit of history to your home. I did.

It came about when a visiting friend remarked that she was taking a stained glass workshop at Studio One near Oakland Tech and needed a project. She pointed out a window that was perfect for a stained glass insert. After research in books about Craftsman Cottages and a survey of nearby stained glass windows, a design was chosen: Three red tulips surrounded by various types of glass panels.

The execution took six months but the results were worth it. Magical glows of varying intensities at different times of the day illuminate the anteroom to my home.





East Bay Home Owners

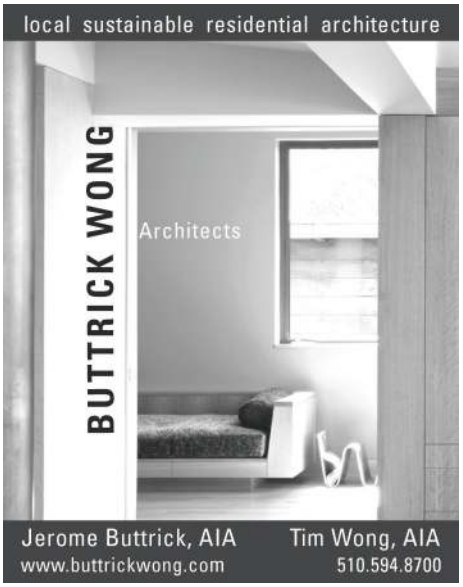
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TAI CHI and QIGONG

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Beautiful 4-bedroom, 3-bath beachfront villa for rent near Tulum, 1.5 hours south of Cancun. Sleeps up to 8, reasonable rates, sits on gorgeous, secluded beach. Visit casarosa.cc or call 510/510-2299.

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Skilled carpentry and handyman services, 36 yrs. Experience. Large and small jobs. Friendly and accountable. Rockridge neighbor. Hourly rates available. Licensed (#509690) and insured. Local references. Jim Harker: 510/381-6401, jimrharker@yahoo.com

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Doggie Day Care

Looking for other doggie families to trade day care. 1-year old energetic puppy needs exercise and socialization. Would like to trade occasional evenings, too. 510/547-8788.

Traditional Karate — Montclair Rec Center

Respectful, safe, yet intense training. Instructor Jeff Violet, 5th degree Black Belt, American Shorin-Ryu Federation. Class begins May 11. $75/6 weeks (2 classes/week). Call 510/482-7812 or oaklandsrkarate@gmail.com.

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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

Greater Rockridge 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: chair@rockridgencpc.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN:

- **Toddler Story Time:** Every Sat., 10:30am.
- **Pre-School Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am.
- **Baby and Toddler Story Time:** 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am, **upstairs**.

★ **CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS** ★ Library enthusiasts 11 to 16 yrs. needed for the **Summer Reading Program** which starts on June 12. Orientations will take place in early June. Contact Erica at 597-5017 or drop by to fill out a volunteer application.

FOR TEENS:

- **Rockridge Ninjas (Anime Club): Teens 13 and up** watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. each month, 5 to 6:30pm, upstairs meeting room.

FOR ADULTS:

- **Writers' Support/Critique Group:** All writers welcome. Bring at least 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 and referrals.** First Tues. each month, 6 to 8pm (call to confirm). Advance sign-up starts 5pm. **Cancelled in June due to Memorial Day Holiday.** More info: 597-5017.

ART EXHIBITS: (Call to confirm)

Gallery:

- May: **Merritt College portrait class**.
- June: **Aya Harashima**: oil paintings.

Lobby Display Case:

- May: **Nancy Elliot**: watercolors.
- June: **Lori Fisher**: handmade dolls.

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 Tues., 6/1.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings/Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Mon., 5/10, 7pm. **Amnesty International Meeting** (2nd Monday each month): All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Tues., 5/11, 7pm. **Deborah Burnes**: *Look Great, Live Green: Choosing Beauty Solutions That Are Planet-Safe and Budget-Smart*.
- Thurs., 5/13, 7pm. **Greil Marcus**: *When That Rough God Goes Riding: Listening to Van Morrison*.
- Sunday, 5/16, 3pm. Local author **Aife Murray**: *Maid as Muse: How Servants Changed Emily Dickinson's Life and Language*.
- Sun., 5/23, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Steve Kowit** and **Alicia Suskin Ostriker**.
- Thurs., 6/3, 7pm. Cartoonist and local author **Daniel Clowes**: *Wilson*.
- Sun., 6/6, 3pm. **Poetry Flash** with **Tom Healy**, **Martha Rhodes** and **Alissa Valles**.
- Sun., 6/13, 3pm. Book Launch Party for local journalist and author **Laura Fraser**: *All Over the Map*.

DIESEL, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave. 653-9965 or www.dieselbookstore.com.

Wisteria Ways Concert Series

Molly's Revenge with Moira Smiley: Celtic music band. Sunday, June 5, 3pm (door opens 2:30pm). $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door).383 61st Street. Outside venue: bring a blanket,/lawn chair and picnic. 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.

Calling All Incoming Peralta Elementary School Kindergarten Kids

Meet each other and families at play-dates on Sunday, 5/16 and Saturday, 5/29: 9:30am at Colby Park (61st Street between Colby and Canning). Info: Nicole Aruda, 547-7976 or nicaruda@earthlink.net.

North Oakland Senior Center

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

- **Loan Modification Clinic: Free** professional help. Tues., 5/11, 10:30am to noon. Register: 271-8443 ext 307.
- **Giant Community Flea Market:** vendor spaces available $15 ($10 for Sr. Center members). Saturday, June 5. Call Center for more info.

Hrs: Mon.—Fri., 8:45am to 4:45pm. **Note: closed Monday, 5/31 for Memorial Day.** 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Closed: 11/11, 11/26-27, and 11/30 (mandatory shutdown).Subscribe to "The North Oakland Senior Times," for a full schedule of classes/events, monthly lunch menu, membership, and opportunities to become a volunteer: 597-5085.

American Red Cross

- **Mobile Blood Drives:** During May, **all presenting donors can enter a drawing to win a $100 Home Depot gift card**. There will be 4 weekly drawings and 4 winners. **Note:** promotion not available at high school or college blood drives. Call 1/800-RED CROSS (800/733-2767) or visit www.redcrossblood.org for a location near you.
- **Volunteer Orientations:** 5/11, 5/19 and 5/25 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). For training schedules and to sign up, call Anne at 594-5165 or BlackstoneA@usa.redcross.org.

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By The Numbers
94618

INVENTORY ↑ DAYS ON MARKET ↔ MARKET CONDITIONS ↔

Recent rising prices may indicate an increase in numbers of "quality" homes on the market.

For the week of: **5/3/10**
Median List Price: **$899,000**
Avg. Days on Market: **141**
Avg. Price per Sq. Ft.: **$406**

Want all the facts?
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