THE Rockridge News
www.rockridge.org
Remember: No Newsletter in August.
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June Town Hall: Development; DEIR

by Michael Kan, RCPC boardmember

As a session dedicated to a review of the most effective ways to prepare written comments on the City's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the College Avenue shopping center development, June's Town Hall presentation attracted many Rockridge residents.

In addition, attendees heard a preview of Safeway's new plans for the Rockridge Shopping Center (RRSC), located at 51st/Pleasant Valley and Broadway.

RCPC Chair and Land Use Committee (LUC) Chairman Stu Flashman outlined the environmental review process that both Safeway projects will go through. He noted that the City is currently preparing a DEIR for each project, with the Col-

DEIR: June Town Hall, page 13



LUC Chair Stuart Flashman reviews DEIR response concepts at the June RCPC Town Hall meeting. PHOTO: ANDREW CHARMAN

More Safeway News: See the Land Use Committee report, page 4.

RCPC Town Hall Meeting
AGENDA
Note Date Change
July 2010

July 22, 2010, 7:30 p.m.
Rockridge Branch Library
5366 College at Manila
Community Room (Upstairs)

■ **Rockridge Center Safeway Development Proposal**

Last year, Safeway unveiled plans for a 110,000 square foot revamp and expansion of the Rockridge Shopping Center… and the silence was deafening. Even the pro-development Oakland Planning Commission panned the project. Now Safeway has returned with a bigger (120,000 sq. ft.) but perhaps better proposal. You be the judge. David Zylstra, CEO of Safeway's Property Development Centers division, will present their latest plans and take comments from the audience.

Come. See. Listen. Respond! It's your neighborhood, your future.

Help Wanted: Board of Directors Positions Open; RCPC Kitchen Tour Co-Chair Vacancy

The Rockridge Community Planning Council seeks applicants for appointment to two openings on its board of directors.

One position would replace Christopher Walters, who was elected to the board in April but was unable to serve.

The other position is RCPC's merchant seat, filled annually by appointment. To apply for either position, send a short letter explaining your qualifications and why you seek appointment. Write either to RCPC, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, 94611, or via e-mail to chair@rockridge.org. July 31 is the deadline to get your letter in.

Time is Running Out: Kitchen Tour Co-Chair Urgently Needed!



The biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour, RCPC's main fundraiser, is still in need of a co-chair for the September, 2011 Tour. The long-time, much-anticipated event is at risk of being discontinued if this position is not filled. To apply, write to Kitchen Tour, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA, 94611, or e-mail chair@rockridge.org, or call RCPC at 510/869-4200 and leave a message.

Annual National Night Out: August 3

Is Your Block On Board?

Tuesday, August 3, 7 to 9 p.m. is National Night Out, a nationwide block party celebrating neighborhood safety.

Last year, some 27,000 Oakland residents participated in 419 block parties throughout the city.

To set up a block party for your block, you can either sign up on-line at www2.oaklandnet.com/nno, or call Brenda Ivey at Oakland's community services department, 238-3809, or e-mail her at bivey@oaklandnet.com. The registration deadline is July 26.

POLICE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

For further information, visit the Web site of the national organization at:
http://www.nationalnightout.org/nno/about.html

New Address **for Newsletter: The Rockridge News, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA, 94611**

City Audit Raps Residential Permit Parking Program Performance

by Jon Gabel, RCPC boardmember

Called for by the City Council more than a year-and-a-half ago, the final Performance Audit of the Residential Permit Parking (RPP) Program was released in June by Oakland City Auditor Courtney A. Ruby.

The document, consisting of 167 pages in three volumes, is strongly critical of almost every aspect of the way in which the RPP Program has been administered. Many of these criticisms have been documented in The Rockridge News and noted by many Rockridge residents.

In broad reply to each section of the audit — "Policies & Analyses," "Revenue & Costs," and "Management Systems" — recently-appointed Director of Parking Operations Noel Pinto said, "...the audit findings reflect actions or decisions made by the prior parking administration. The report gives the appearance that the audit findings reflect current conditions under the new parking administration which is not the case."

A new computer system which has just become operational (article, page 3) appears able to address some of the issues raised in the audit. It is anticipated that City Council action will be required on other issues.

Given the length of the audit reports, this article will only touch on the most important conclusions. Readers can find the full reports online at the Audit Reports section of the Auditor's Web site: http://www.oaklandauditor.com/audits/reports.

Following are highlights of the audit, by section:

● **Policies & Analyses: Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program's Policies for Cost and Revenue Analyses Were Incomplete:**

This report gives a brief history of the RPP Program, including the fee schedules. Because of the parking impact of the Rockridge BART station, RPP holders in Rockridge pay one of the costs of having a rapid transit system that serves the entire Bay Area. Therefore, it is an open question whether Rockridge residents should have to pay the entire cost of their RPPs. The report states:

"The audit found that the City lacks a clear policy on:

- The level of cost that should be recovered for providing government programs and services (i.e., a specific percentage such as 100% cost recovery or 50% cost recovery);
- When less than full cost recovery would be appropriate;
- What types of cost are to be included in the cost analysis of City programs and services."

One of the questions raised by residents when the City Council twice voted to increase RPP fees was: Why was citation revenue not included in the financial analysis? The amount of revenue from RPP enforcement remains unknown. However, regarding all enforcement costs and revenues, the report states "…generally the revenue generated by Enforcement staff exceeds the costs: For last Fiscal Year the enforcement revenue collected was $23,930,986 while the cost of the enforcement staff was $3,327,823."

The report also stated that the practices in place "Allow stakeholder input into formulation of the [RPP] policy." It should be noted that the last time RPP fees were raised by the City Council, the public received three days' notice that the item was on the Council's agenda.

Key Findings:

- "The City's policies do not clearly

Residential Parking Audit, page 3

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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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Publication date of the next issue is
☛ September 4, 2010
☛ September deadline is August 19, 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.)*

Residential Parking Audit

from page 2

define the intended level of cost recovery for the RPP Program, as well as the types of costs that should be included in the Program's cost analysis.

- "Parking Management did not track or include all relevant costs (enforcement, benefits, overhead, etc.) in its FY 2008-09 cost analysis of the RPP Program.
- "Parking Management was not able to provide the evidence necessary to validate over 90% of its FY 2008-09 cost analysis.
- "Parking Management did not present all revenue sources related to the RPP Program, such as RPP citation revenue, that should be included in the RPP Program's revenue analysis."

● **From "Revenue & Costs: Weak Oversight of Entities that Pay Residential Permit Parking Program Permits Resulted in Uncollected Revenue and Unanticipated Costs:"**

This report notes that "not every Oakland resident who lives in an RPP area and has an RPP pays for it. Residents in some parts of Area A, all of Area E, and Area H have their permits paid for by a third party entity…[such as] Kaiser Permanente Hospital, Head-Royce School and Highland Hospital…. Parking Management did not have proper internal controls in place to manage relationships with third party entities that pay for RPPs, resulting in up to $120,000 in uncollected, non-invoiced and improperly accounted for revenue."

Key Findings:

- "Parking Management did not have documented agreements for all relationships with third party entities.
- "Parking Management lacked an accounts receivable management system to manage third-party entity transactions.
- "Parking Management did not invoice third-party entities in a timely manner, including an estimated $15,000 for FY 2008-09.
- "Parking Management did not collect outstanding accounts receivables totaling approximately $50,000 from two third party entities.
- "Parking Management did not maintain adequate financial records to prove payment of invoices, totaling approximately $40,000.
- "Parking Management did not charge third-party entities late fees for delinquent payments totaling approximately $15,000.
- "Parking Management was not aware that the City subsidized approximately $85,000 in Area B RPP sales."

● **From "Management Systems: Weak Management Systems for the Residential Parking Permit Program Resulted in Operational Inefficiencies and Uncollected Revenue:"**

This report says that "the length of time it takes to process each permit was approximately 50 minutes" and "permit expiration is concentrated on one [annual] date and creates a backlog for RPP Permit renewal processing."

Key Findings:

- "Parking Management did not adequately address operational inefficiencies by streamlining documentation requirements and utilizing technology enhancements.
- "RPP Program staff efficiency for processing permits has not been maximized.
- "RPP Area residents are dissatisfied with the RPP Program because of the inefficiencies of the program.
- "Parking Management did not collect approximately $20,000 in revenue from outstanding parking citations over three fiscal years.
- "Parking Management did not implement a policy and procedure to check for outstanding parking citations before issuing a permit."

Automation Comes to RPP

by Jon Gabel, RCPC boardmember

At its monthly meeting on June 23 in Oakland City Hall, the Oakland Merchants Leadership Forum (OMLF) presented several speakers, some of whom addressed parking issues. These included Director of Parking Operations Noel Pinto, Senior Transportation Manager Bruce Williams, and a member of the Mayors Parking Task Force, Alton Jelks.

Pinto reported on the new Citation Administration and Revenue Reconciliation System, (CARRS), which was described in the April 2010 Rockridge News. As of June 14, CARRS is now up and running, Pinto said, including online features and a new telephone answering system. Traffic citations are now being handled electroncially by CARRS (as opposed to the paper-based system previously in place), eliminating the six week delay between the time a citation was issued and the time when the City was able to accept payment.

Residential Permit Parking (RPP) applications and renewals will be handled by the program by August 31. Residents will be able to apply for, renew and pay for RPP permits online. Proof of residency will now be required only every three years; this will involve mailing in a bill or other such evidence. Another benefit is that the new telephone system is more accurate regarding wait times and is more responsive, according to Pinto.

Pinto said he would look into a request by Chris Jackson, operations manager for the Rockridge District Association (RDA), to increase the number of business RPP permits, even if this requires a higher price for these permits. Businesses currently pay $80/year for business RPP permits.

Pinto also fielded complaints from attendees regarding enforcement of paid parking by the use of kiosks. Parking Division personnel are now instructed to check for people who are in the process of buying time at a kiosk before writing citations. If the nearest kiosk is not operating, personnel check the next kiosk as well.

Bruce Williams reported that the City is investigating the use of "market based pricing" for parking. This system changes the price of parking depending upon several factors, such as the amount of usage, time of day, and number of open parking

RPP System Enhanced, page 6

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Next meeting: July 28. Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room: 7:30 p.m.

■ **Land Use Meeting Agendas**

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

by Stuart Flashman,
RCPC Land Use Committee chair

■ Rockridge Montessori School (6516 Broadway)

The RCPC board heard from Rockridge Montessori's owners and architect at its June meeting. Boardmembers expressed concern about the inadequacy of the traffic report, potential impact to bicycle safety, especially after bike lanes are installed on Broadway, and the school's continuing expansion into a residential-zoned area. In the end, the board voted to oppose the application unless the school agreed to a number of conditions, including several traffic mitigation measures and a binding commitment not to seek any further expansion without prior approval from the RCPC board. RCPC awaits a response from the school.

Meanwhile, at the land use committee's June meeting, committee members heard from concerned neighboring residents. Complaints included excessive noise and traffic, blocked driveways, and the school's repeated failure to live up to past promises. These concerns will be discussed further at the RCPC board's July meeting. While RCPC continues to seek a mutually agreeable compromise solution, the apparent lack of trust between the school and its neighbors is a major obstacle.

The Oakland planner handling the case is Ulla Britt-Jonsson (238-3322, ujonsson@oaklandnet.com).

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

The RCPC board also heard a presentation from David Zystra of Safeway's Property Development Centers division, who reported that the newest revised plans for redeveloping the Rockridge Shopping Center involve a slightly bigger expansion (130,000 sq. ft. versus 110,000 sq. ft in the previous proposal). They also include actual internal streets within the shopping center, rooftop parking instead of the subterranean lot previously proposed, and a new three-story structure on the corner of Pleasant Valley and Broadway, where the Chase Bank building is now.

Still to be determined is how or whether all of the functions now performed by the CVS drug store (e.g., hardware store, garden center, housewares store, toy store, school supplies store) will continue after the store closes. (CVS's lease expires next July.)

While the new plans are much improved over Safeway's previous proposal, they still show the center accessed almost exclusively by automobiles. RCPC boardmembers suggested several ways to create better transit access. One notable proposal would be to move the AC Transit 51A/51B turnaround from the Rockridge BART station to the interior of the shopping center, installing a transit station at the center. With a new signalized entrance off of Broadway, such a transit station might simplify and expedite the operation of the split line, while also eliminating a major annoyance to residents along Keith, Miles, and Forest. Safeway has also said it is in discussions with Kaiser-Oakland about adding the Rockridge Shopping Center to the itinerary of the shuttle that now runs between Kaiser and MacArthur BART. With that and a new 51 A/B stop, the Center would have much improved public transit access, potentially reducing its traffic impacts. Much will depend, however, on whether AC Transit is willing to have a transit station on private property.

Safeway will present its plans for the center to the Rockridge community at the July Town Hall Meeting, Thursday, July 22, 7:30 p.m. at the Rockridge Branch Library. The meeting may be moved to a larger venue to accommodate the expected crowd. Check the rockridge.org Web site or the library bulletin board for updates, or sign up for the RCPC e-newsletter to receive timely updates on this and other upcoming events. (E-mail info@rockridge.org to sign up for the e-news.)

■ Citywide Zoning Update

After a series of public meetings where zoning plans were presented, city staff now believes the city's proposed zoning revisions are ready to begin the formal approval process. The first step will be a review by the Planning Commission's Zoning Update Committee. The first hearing, which will cover North Oakland (including Rockridge) and the Oakland Hills, is scheduled for July 14 at 4 p.m. at Oakland City Hall, Hearing Room 1 (1st floor). Two items that Rockridge residents may wish to comment on are:

1) The lack of any upper limit on project size in the new CN-1 zone proposed to replace College Avenue's current C-31 zoning. (RCPC suggested putting a 50,000 sq. ft. cap on the size of projects in the CN-1 zone, but city planning staff rejected the suggestion);

2) Limitations on the expansion of commercial uses in residentially zoned areas. The new residential zoning allows commercial uses to continue at some limited sites (e.g., to allow existing convenience stores to continue as a fully legal use, as opposed to a legal nonconforming use). Some Rockridge residents expressed concern that this would allow continuation and expansion of commercial uses on the residentially zoned portion of Broadway in Rockridge.

Residents have also expressed a desire to place a maximum size limitation on the current provision allowing church and school uses in residential areas, subject to a minor conditional use permit.

■ College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center (Corner of College & Claremont Avenues)

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on this 62,000 sq. ft. commercial project is expected to be released some time in the next month or two. RCPC will post information about the DEIR's availability on the rockridge.org Web site and will also send out notification of the publication on the RCPC e-newsletter. Copies should be available for review at the Rockridge branch library and in electronic form on the City's Web site.

RCPC has received a $10,000 matching grant from the Rose Foundation to help fund technical and legal review of the DEIR. Those wishing to make a donation to help this important work can send a check, made out to RCPC/College Avenue Safeway Project to RCPC, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakaland, CA 94611.

Donations may also be made online using PayPal from the College Avenue Safeway Project page at the rockridge.org Web site.

4th Bore Mitigation Areas Surveyed in Consultant's Rockridge Walking Tour

by The 4th Bore Coalition

Representatives from the Rockridge neighborhood, including Claremont Middle and Chabot schools, the city of Oakland Transportation Services Department, RCPC, Rockridge District Association (RDA), East Bay Bicycle Coalition (EBBC), North Hills Phoenix Association (NHPA), Fourth Bore Coalition (FBC) and consultants participated in the Oakland mitigation walking tour early in June.

The tour was to determine mitigative measures that would help offset impending noise and traffic expected to result from construction of the new tunnel and subsequent increased vehicle traffic on Hwy. 24.

The lengthy tour started at the Claremont and College Avenue intersection, proceeded along College Avenue to Manila Avenue, then cut over to Broadway to finish at Brookside. Along the way, participants explained intersection issues and worked with the consultants on pedestrian and bike improvements. Pedestrian crossing issues along Broadway and Claremont Avenues were also mentioned.

Installation of soundwalls is another project on the list. A noise study by consultant Wilson Ihrig, commissioned by Caltrans as part of the Oakland settlement, ascertained sound levels along Hwy. 24 residences between Hwy. 13 and I-580. Many locations qualify for soundwalls based on noise levels equal to or greater than 65 dB, including residences along Keith, Locksley, and Miles avenues.*

RCPC has submitted background material on potential projects to the city of Oakland. During the summer, the City plans to develop project fact sheets for the public meetings.

The RCPC September Town Hall will be the Rockridge meeting venue for the public meetings. Watch for more information in the September Rockridge News. For additional information and breaking news, visit www.rockridge.org.

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* According to the Web site of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, sounds rated as "very loud" include the following, listed with their dB rating: 80 dB = alarm clock, busy street; 70 dB = busy traffic, vacuum cleaner; 60 dB = conversation, dishwasher. (http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/disorders/noise.htm)



September Maintenance Day for FROG Park:

Save this date! Saturday, September 18, is Fall Maintenance Day. Work will continue throughout the weekend and possibly beyond. The Park will be closed during this time.

FROG plans to completely replace the playground wood chips (fibar) and perform maintenance on the structure itself.

Anyone interested in helping should contact Howard Ferrier at hwferrier@frogpark.org.

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Daily Bread Seeks Refrigerator

Many readers may remember an article in the January 2010 issue of The Rockridge News seeking to recruit volunteers for our Daily Bread organization — we gather leftover foods from many sources in the area, e.g. markets, bakeries, restaurants, and even occasional parties and social events, and deliver them to shelters and charitable organizations that provide food to people in need. One of our most generous providers is Market Hall and we are so appreciative of their efforts for our organization. We had an overwhelming response and now have a cadre of new and enthusiastic volunteers working on this worthwhile project. Thanks to all who agreed to take on this cause!



In the January article we also mentioned that we were looking for a donation of a refrigerator—either with or without a site—so that we could store perishable food donations overnight and deliver them the following day. The one lead we received ultimately didn't pan out. But things change, so we are asking again if anyone has a refrigerator that they are not using and would be willing to donate for our organization's use. Please contact me if you fit this description. Thanks in advance. My contact info is: 510/655-6432; email: joanmsautter@yahoo.com.

—Joan Sautter

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RPP System Enhanced

from page 3

spaces in an area. San Francisco is trying out this system, and Williams expressed the wish for a pilot program in Oakland.

A survey of merchants indicates there is opposition to both market based pricing and what is perceived as excessive parking prices in effect now. Some merchants feel that this high pricing is leading customers to go to other cities where parking is less expensive.

Alton Jelks, who also teaches Business at Peralta College, is heading an effort to write a comprehensive parking policy for the City. Jelks stated that he believed this policy should be integrated with a retail policy for each neighborhood.

On June 28, this writer and Rockridge News editor Don Kinkead met with Pinto, Administrative Services Manager Joe Litton, and Sherry Jackson, Accountant. In light of the release of the Final Performance Audit Reports on the RPP Program (article, page 2), Pinto was asked that the new CARRS software be utilized to determine the actual cost of operating RPP, including administrative costs, enforcement costs, and revenue from the purchase of permits and from citations.

Pinto said that under the new and more efficient system, specific personnel are no longer dedicated to RPP tasks. Instead, many employees split their time between RPP and other Parking Division activities. Since the City Council has not mandated the tracking of RPP administrative and enforcement costs by the Traffic Division, Pinto's department would not be able to provide the requested information. Were the council to mandate collection of this information, a methodology would have to be developed, Pinto said.

For example, since enforcement officers write citations for many types of violations on each shift; some are for RPP violations but most are not. A method to estimate the labor and vehicle costs for the RPP portion would have to be established.



Rockridge Masons Host School Fund-Raiser

In April, the Rockridge Masonic Lodge, known more fully as the Oakland Durant Rockridge Lodge #188, hosted a fund-raising pancake breakfast on behalf of Claremont Middle School. The public was invited to attend three seatings in the ornate dining room of the lodge at 5449 College Avenue, pictured at right, to enjoy an all-you-can-eat pancake feast for a donation to the school. More than $4,000 was raised.



Pancake Breakfast Brings in the Bread!

by Chris Jackson, RDA operations manager

On April 24, the Rockridge Masonic Lodge hosted the First Annual Pancake Breakfast to support Claremont Middle School. Working closely with the Masons were the Claremont PTA and the Rockridge District Association (RDA). Proceeds from the event, which raised over $4,000, will be used to support school programs focusing on arts and media. This event was not only a fundraiser but a community builder as people from the school, residential and business communities met and mingled.

The community response to the breakfast was beautifully summed up in an e-mail Chris Jackson received from Norma Taylor, Vice-Principal Kevin Taylor's mother:

"It was quite the experience, totally above and beyond what I could have expected. In my 13 years in education I never participated in such a successful fundraiser, not only in the money that was earned for the school, $4,000, but in the unique community-building experience where community stakeholders from all arenas shared in conversation and bountiful food in a unique environment. I sat down at my table with local firemen, parents from feeder schools and Mason leadership. I learned about this great community from a variety of different vantage points and left the community-building breakfast full of pancakes and knowledge. I wish we could have them once a month."

Others recognized that the Masons had put on a great feed, one that was not just three pancakes on a paper plate, but as one person said was a "five star meal" and asked, "Can we do this every quarter?"

This event was possible because so many folks gave their time and energy to make it all happen. Special thanks go to the following; Rockridge Masonic Lodge: Ed Stevenson; Claremont Middle School PTA: Patrick Zak, Chan U Lee, Kathy Rieves, Keith Tramiel and Julie Parker; The Rockridge District Association and participating merchants, without whom the bounty would have been much less.

And, here's to Rockridge merchants: Allstate, Bosko's Picture Framing, DHR Investment Counsel, Fit, Garibaldi's, Green Graphics, Rockridge Rags, Rockridge Home, Rockridge Royal Cleaners, and Vero. Thanks also to those merchants who showed support by displaying an event poster.





Breakfast photos and captions from the Lodge's Flickr site. College Avenue view of the Lodge: Don Kinkead

During Oakland Durant Rockridge's First Annual Pancake Breakast in support of the Rockridge District Association and the PTA of Oakland's Claremont School, Otha Cotton, the Lodge's current Master, watched Brother Kevin Hulme provide the Serving Line with more oranges.



Oakland Durant Rockridge's Dining Hall/Third Floor, full with visitors during its First Annual Pancake Breakfast to benefit the Rockridge District Association and the Parent Teacher Association of Oakland's Claremont School (and which netted the PTA a little more than $4,000.)





In order to get fed, ODR's visitors to its First Annual Pancake Breakfast had to pass through the serving line manned (or brothered?) by Lodge brothers (from far left to right) David Freed, PM; Joe Bruno; Luchana Chessa; and David Forsyth.





Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

Culinary Boot Camp

Whenever I'm asked what it was like to attend the California Culinary Academy, my response is "boot camp." The follow-up question is, "How was it like boot camp?" Although I never served in the military, as a student at the CCA, I was expected to dress in a spotlessly clean uniform. If anything was out of place we were ordered to fix it. Instructors were always called "chef" and never by their first name. Knives and other tools in our culinary kit were checked every morning before starting to cook. Anything out of place had to be made right or we would be asked to leave the kitchen. Every direction had to be followed with precise detail. Any deviation from these rules would result in a lower grade.

That being said, my time at the Academy was an incredible experience in learning the culinary arts. I proudly wear my Academy graduation patch on my chef's coat. As is necessary in any art form, perfecting the basic skills is essential. Here are five culinary skills that I constantly practice:

1. Use only the highest quality knives. A good French chef's knife is a friend forever. Over 40 years ago, my mother-in-law gave us two carbon-steel Sabatier knives. I treasure these knives and they surpass my more recently acquired stainless steel Wüsthof knives. Knives should be professionally sharpened twice a year and honed before every use. I urge all serious home cooks to purchase Peter Hertzmann's *Knife Skills Illustrated* (Norton Press).

2. Prepare all ingredients called for in recipe before you start to cook. The French term for this preparation is *mise en place*. Know the difference between chop, dice, and mince. Avoid using your food processor for chopping. By using the food processor, you will never learn appropriate knife skills, and the ingredients tend to come out mushy. Practice with onions, carrots and celery.

3. Taste and season as you cook. Most recipes call for adding salt and pepper to taste. At the Academy, our chef instructors would constantly yell at us: KEEP TASTING! Sprinkle salt and pepper from about 6-8 inches above the food you are seasoning. You will have better control of where the seasoning goes. Avoid using salt and pepper shakers; use your fingers to add the seasonings.

4. When is it done? Ah, the age-old question. Nearly every recipe gives time for cooking. However, no two pots or pans are exactly alike. A 15,000 BTU burner at high cooks very differently than a 20,000 BTU burner. Oven temperatures vary greatly. There are too many variables to give an exact cooking time. Professional chefs always have an idea of what they are looking for when cooking on the stove-top or in the oven.

Rather than sauté onions for 5 minutes, cook them until they begin to brown or are translucent. Always use an instant-read thermometer when checking for the doneness of meat or poultry. A recipe may call for a roast to cook for 40 minutes (for medium rare) in a 425° oven, but depending on where in the oven you place the roast, it may take longer.

5. Less is more. When including garnishes or other presentation highlights, always use sparingly. Garnishes should add color and nuanced taste to the dish. Presentation elements require a very light touch, and simplicity should be the rule. Garnishes should not only be appealing to the eye, but should also complement the flavor of the dish. They can vary from a simple sprig of parsley to curved thin leaves of chocolate on a chocolate mousse.

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

Tuna Au Poivre



(Two servings. Doneness is up to you; no cooking time noted)

2 tablespoons ground pepper (how finely to grind the pepper is up to you)

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

Two 6-8 ounce tuna steaks (1-inch thick)

Salt

2 tablespoons butter

1/4 cup minced (not chopped) shallots

3/4 cup dry red wine

- Put pepper on a flat plate. Put olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Dredge both sides of the tuna lightly in the pepper; remember, less is more! When the oil is hot, add the steaks to the pan. Turn the heat to high. Sprinkle with salt and cook both sides until desired doneness. Remove from heat and loosely tent with aluminum foil.
- Add half the butter to the pan followed by the shallots. Turn the heat to medium and cook until the shallots soften. Turn the heat to medium-high and add the wine. Let it bubble away and add the remaining butter. Stir until the butter melts and the sauce reduces until thickened. Place each tuna steak on a plate and spoon a little of the sauce over it.

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Letters to the Editor

The Rockridge News welcomes letters to the editor. Your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and city/neighborhood must be included for verification. Only your name will appear with your letter. Letters may be edited for clarity and brevity.

51 Bus Line Stops are Dangerous

Editor:

In the June 5 issue of The Rockridge News, you discussed the new bus stop at the intersection of Miles and College, and the traffic back-up that it has caused. I agree with you and I want to add a further observation.

I am a driver who regularly drives up Shafter past Market Hall and straight as it becomes Keith, crossing the busy intersection with College that has clearly posted notices about the traffic lights. Unfortunately, each time that the bus lets off passengers on Keith by Cactus Taqueria, at least a few get off the bus and jaywalk across to the BART station, regardless of the traffic flow and the lights. Often, it is impossible to see the pedestrians until it is too late, since many of them cross in front of the bus. Since I regularly drive this route, I know to slow when the bus is stopped (despite the occasional honk of the driver behind me) to make sure that there are no pedestrians, but I am concerned that it is only a matter of time before someone is hit.

— *Anne Schmitz*

Parking Enforcement Goes Too Far

Editor:

I know the budget crunch is the biggest focus of the City right now, but the parking enforcement situation is insane on College Avenue, and I've heard it is the same way city-wide.



My wife and I got a $55 ticket for the "infraction" shown in the photo—evidently this is considered to be "parking over the marked space." When I asked the parking officer why he would give someone a ticket for something as silly as this, he commented, "We are giving tickets for things a lot less worse than that... we've been told to issue as many tickets per day that we can." Really?

I then spoke with John Kerns and Bert Jacobs, owners of Brass and Glass on College Avenue. John told me that he and his customers are getting dozens of tickets weekly for ridiculous infractions and that he recently spent an entire day at the city fighting and winning the reversal of more than $1,000 of parking tickets from his trucks and employees' cars. As I asked around, I heard more and more horror stories regarding the parking ticket situation on College Avenue.

Is this really how we want to treat paying customers and neighbors? Can anything be done about this?

— *Mike McDonald*



Do You Have 20 Minutes to Spare Each Month?

Marcy Whitebook has volunteered to take the Hillegass/Alcatraz route that opened up in June. Thanks, Marcy, and we hope you inspire a couple of other Rockridgians to volunteer for the two routes that are listed below. The Claremont Avenue route has been served by volunteer Niccolo de Luca for several years. Thank you Niccolo and good luck in your new digs. Please keep the Rockridge News coming to every home in Rockridge by volunteering a bit of your time to deliver to these routes. Call or e-mail and refer to the route number below. 547-3855 or smontauk@gmail.com

Route # Description

18Ga Block Captain: Both sides of Claremont Avenue from freeway to Clifton.

07 District Captain: 6 bundle drops on blocks off Broadway

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Commuters Encouraged to Participate in 'Great Race' for Clean Air

With summer in full swing, the sun is inviting Rockridge residents outdoors to enjoy some fresh air. To help keep the air fresh, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is challenging businesses and their employees to participate in the Great Race for Clean Air, which runs from August 1 to September 30. Registraion is currently ongoing. In this friendly competition for great prizes, employees are encouraged to use commute alternatives such as carpooling, carsharing, biking, walking or riding public transit to work. Even skateboarding and telecommuting count!



It is especially important to adopt a more air-friendly commute because air pollution can have both minor and serious health effects: it can irritate your eyes, nose, and throat; cause shortness of breath; aggravate asthma and other respiratory conditions; and even affect your heart and cardiovascular system. By participating in the Great Race for Clean Air, employees can help protect their health while they save time, money and the stress of driving in traffic to work.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is challenging employees to participate in the Great Race for Clean Air, which runs from August 1 to September 30.

Luckily, employees who live in Rockridge have easy access to the Rockridge BART station, two City CarShare pods, and multiple bus lines that run through the neighborhood. It's no wonder Rockridge is nationally recognized as a very sustainable, walkable and navigable neighborhood. Still, if only one-fifth of Rockridge's nearly 4,000 residents took public transportation instead of driving alone, they could reduce their carbon emissions by 20 percent! Ready to start the race? Get your company to register before July 15 at www.sparetheair.org.

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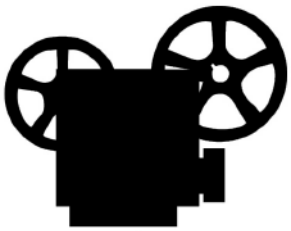
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Dust Off Your Old Home Movies and Share Them with Your Neighbors

Home Movie Day is celebrated annually in more than 50 towns worldwide. Bring it home to Pacific Film Archive (PFA) by sharing with us one or two reels of your home movies on 8mm, Super 8mm, or 16mm.

Feel free to come by PFA with your home movie gems from now until August 31 for the October screening.



The earlier the better, but it's never too early to start digging for your home movies. Ask your great uncle, grandma or dad if they have movies stashed somewhere…or maybe you found some at a flea market or an estate sale?

All subjects are welcome, but this year we're searching particularly for travel/vacation/adventure films — by foot, bike, car, horse, rickshaw, train, tuk tuk, gondola… We're also interested in views of the Bay Area shot from a tourist perspective. We'll inspect each reel to make sure the film is in good condition to project.

If you can't submit in advance, bring your films in on:

Home Movie Day
Saturday, October 16
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Screening begins at 1 p.m.
Admission is free to anyone who submits a film.

Location: 2575 Bancroft Way, between College and Telegraph. PFA Theater Box Office opens one hour before the first showtime of the day.

For submission instructions, please visit: http://bampfa.berkeley.edu/homemovieday.

It is to laugh, if not to cry...



"We have made parking easier & more convenient than ever!" say the little signs on each of the City's parking kiosks. "Messier, more expensive, and more confusing," one retorts. For example, no cost per period of time is posted anywhere on the kiosks. How shall a user know the cost to park? What if a user learns that it costs $2 per hour today, the price goes up tomorrow, and the user puts in the expected hourly amount, feeling no need to check the receipt and no way to check the price?

"Caveat emptor," the kiosk will say. — *Editor*



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

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by Theresa Nelson

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DEIR: June Town Hall

from page 1

lege Avenue Safeway EIR due out some time this summer. Flashman emphasized the importance of providing factual evidence to support the comments. For example, a comment that "this project will make a mess or traffic" will be ignored as unsupported opinion, but a comment stating that, based on personal experience, driving through this section of College Avenue now takes 10 to 15 minutes during evening rush hour, and that adding several hundred additional trips during that time will make a bad situation worse, would have to be responded to.

Flashman also outlined the major areas that the DEIR will probably cover, noting that traffic will probably be the main focus of the EIR. He noted that RCPC had received a $10,000 matching grant to hire technical experts to review the EIR. (Land Use Committee Update, page 3.)

David Zylstra of Safeway's Property Development Centers (PDC) subsidiary had presented revised plans for the RRSC redesign at the RCPC board of directors June meeting, one week earlier. The redesign includes two story buildings with rooftop parking, relocation of the Safeway store to the current CVS Pharmacy store area, a large parking lot in front of the relocated Safeway and design changes to the area's perimeter, most notably along Broadway and 51st/Pleasant Valley Road. The changes evoked concerned comments from attendees regarding traffic congestion in and around the shopping center.

The questions and discussion of the College Avenue Safeway focused on the DEIR release date and the commenting process.

In closing, Flashman recommended that Rockridge area residents and community groups review both projects and submit written comments on the College Avenue Safeway DEIR. Safeway will be presenting its plans for the Rockridge Shopping Center redesign at RCPC's July Town Hall meeting. (See front page agenda announcement.)



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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, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the month.

Compiled by Jo Ellis

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

City Council President Jane Brunner's Annual District One Community Picnic

Everyone invited. Sunday, July 11, noon to 4pm. **BBQ and drinks provided** — bring a side dish or dessert to share. North shore picnic site at Lake Temescal: 6500 B'way, next to the highway 24/13 interchange. Park free on B'way or $5 in the parking lot. If you need a ride, call 238-7014.

Note: No Community Meetings July and Aug. More information: 238-7001 or www.oaklandnet.com (the site for all City-related information).

Rockridge Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

The residential and business community meets with OPD to discuss concerns about crime and public safety. July and Aug.: 2nd Thurs. each month, 7pm. Rockridge Library, upstairs meeting room, 5366 College Ave. **For time/place of Sept. mtg. go to** www.rockridgencpc.com. Info: chair@rockridgencpc.com.

Rockridge Branch Library

5366 College Avenue, 597-5017

FOR CHILDREN

Toddler Story Time: Every Saturday, 10:30am.

Pre-School Story Time: 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am.

Baby and Toddler Story Time: 1st and 3rd Wed., 10:30am, upstairs.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

"Make a Splash, Read!" Summer Reading Program continues through Aug.14 for kids up to age 13. Sign up, read or listen to another reader; **get prizes for completed hours**.

NOTE: The Summer Reading game ends Aug. 14. Children can participate at any Oakland Library Branch, each of which is hosting special events. See www.oaklandlibrary.org, or pick up a calendar for details.

- **Flute Sweet & Tickle Tunes:** Green Golly and Her Golden Flute. Tues., 7/13, 7pm. *
- **Swazzle Puppets:** glow-in-the-dark spectacular. Tues., 7/20, 7pm.
- **Crab Cove:** Creatures of the Bay touch tank of reptiles, crabs and marine animals. Thurs., 7/22, 11am.
- **Buki the Clown:** Magic, laughs and fun. Tues., 7/27, 7pm.
- **Juan Sanchez:** live music, Spanish and English songs, stories and games. Wed., 7/28, 10:30am.
- **Puppet Art Theater:** Tommy's Pirate Adventure. Tues., 8/17, 7pm.
- **Free** family fun at the **Summer Reading Splashdown at the Oakland Museum** (1000 Oak St.) on Sunday, Aug. 1, 12:30 to 4:30pm.

Book Buddies: For ages 2-9. Have someone read to you or listen while you read aloud. Wednesdays, 2 to 4pm, through Aug.4.

FOR TEENS

- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club: Ages 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. each month, 5 to 6:30pm, upstairs meeting rm.
- **Teen Summer Program:** Pick up your Teen Summer Passport and get it stamped as you explore Bay Area Hot Spots. **Enter raffles to win great prizes.**
- **BOOK BUDDIES: Ages 12–18** volunteer to read to kids on Wednesdays during the summer. Pick up an application.

Info about teen programs: Susy at 597-5017.

FOR ADULTS

- **Writers Support/Critique Group:** All writers welcome. Bring 16 copies of up to 5 pgs. (double-spaced, manuscript margins) 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.

ART EXHIBITS (call to confirm)

Gallery:

- July: **Lori Fisher:** handmade dolls.
- August: **Adult Day Center**

Lobby Display Case: TBA: call for info.

LIBRARY HOURS

Tues: 12:30 to 8pm.
Wed., Thurs. and Sat.: 10am to 5:30pm.
Fri.: 12 to 5:30pm.
Closed: Sundays and Mondays; also 7/3, 8/13 and 9/10 for mandatory business shutdown days; and 9/7 and 9/9 for holidays.

Diesel Book/Poetry Readings/Events

All events are FREE and open to the public.

- Thurs., 7/8, 6pm. **Bay Area Writers' Project Young Writers' Camp** share their work.
- Sun., 7/11, 3pm. **Poetry Flash:** contributors **Dan Clurman, Susan Kolodny, Priscilla Lee, Sharon Dubiago, Al Young** and more, reading from the Six-teen Rivers Press anthology, *The Place That Inhabits Us: Poems of the San Francisco Bay Watershed*.
- Mon., 7/12, 7pm. **Amnesty International Meeting** (2nd Monday each month): All invited to exchange ideas on action.
- Sunday, 7/25, 3pm. **Stefanie Syman:** *The Subtle Body: The Story of Yoga in America*.
- Mondays, 8/9 and 9/13, 7pm. **Amnesty International Meeting**.

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

Rockridge Summer Jazz & Wine Stroll

Rockridge merchants are hosting another special evening of live music, wine, food tastings and great deals from local shops: the Summer Sequel to the hugely popular Stroll in May. Friday night, July 16 from 5 to9pm along College Ave. from Claremont to B'way. Info: chris@rockridgedistrict.com.

Third Annual Temescal Street Cinema

Free outdoor films by Bay Area Artists. Free popcorn. Live music ranging from Brazilian jazz to old-timey blues and an a cappella choir. Music begins at 8pm; films at 8:30pm. Thursdays, through July 22; 49th St. and Telegraph (side of the Bank of the West bldg.). Limited seating; come early or bring a chair. Sponsored by the Temescal/Telegraph Business Improvement District. For schedule (including trailers): www.temescal-streetcinema.com.

Wisteria Ways House Concert Series

Big Wide Grin: A soulfully acoustic 3 piece band. Saturday, Sept. 4, 3pm (door opens 2:30pm). $15-20 donation for musicians (cash only at the door).383 61st Street. Outside concert, wheelchair accessible. Bring a blanket,/lawn chair and picnic. For reservations (highly recommended), RSVP to info@WisteriaWays.org or 655-2771.

Christensen Heller Gallery

Exhibit of watercolors by local artist **Christina Schneck**. Show runs through August 15. Galley hrs: Wed–Sat., 11am to 6pm; Sun. noon to 5pm. 5829 College Ave. Info: 655-5952 or www.christensenheller.com.

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.

- **AARP Driving Classes:** drive safely and get insurance discounts. Refresher class, 7/22; 1st time classes, 7/27 and 7/29. Call for details.
- **Giant Community Flea Market:** Sat., Aug.7. 8am to 3pm. Clean out your closet and garage! Vendor space $15 (cash only). Sign up in advance at reception desk.

Hrs: Mon. – Fri., 8:45am to 4:45pm. **Note: closed Monday, 7/5**. 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Subscribe to "The North Oakland Senior Times," for a full schedule of classes/events, lunch menus, membership, and opportunities to become a volunteer. More info: 597- 5085.



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