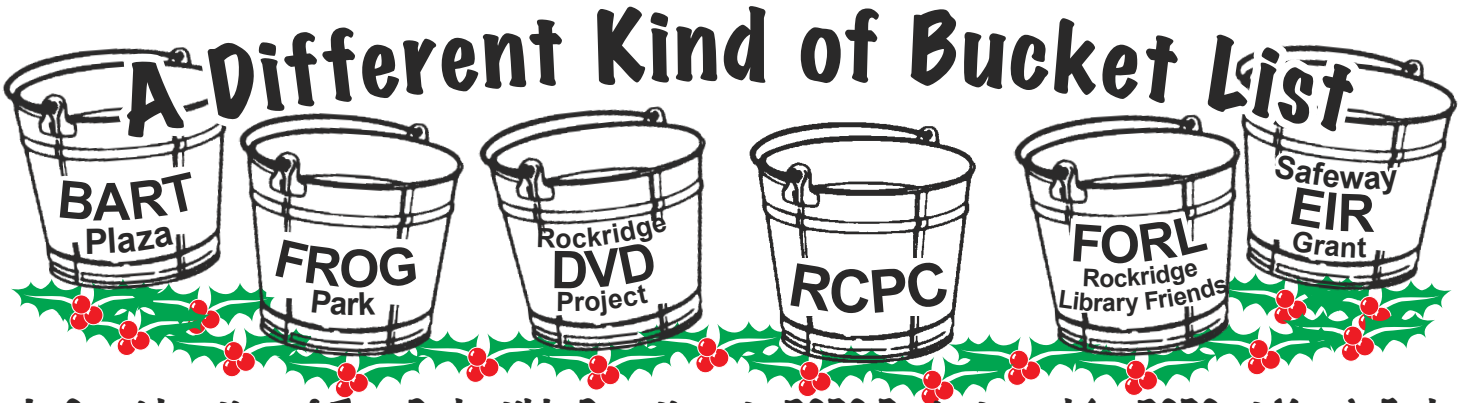
THE Rockridge News

www.rockridge.org

VOL. 25 ■ NO. 11 ■ ISSUE NO. 273 ■ December 4, 2010 ■ CIRCULATION: 5,100 RESIDENCES; 200 BUSINESSES

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In Consideration of Tax-Deductible Donations to RCPC Projects and/or RCPC at Year's End

The film "The Bucket List" told a story of two men, each with a list of things to do in the limited time before they "kicked the bucket."

The buckets pictured above represent projects in Rockridge that have vital futures rather than limited existence, and these projects need your attention now to reach their fullest potential; the attention they need is donations. A donation to one or more of the projects can also help with a pressing activity many people face at this time of year; making qualifying tax-deductible donations before December 31.

Alongside the general articles in this issue of The Rockridge News are articles identified by a bucket with descriptions of the particular project and how you can donate to support it. Find a bucket – or two or more – and help to fill it!

To support particular Rockridge projects or institutions, direct your donations to those specific choices. To donate to RCPC for general support of the organization's efforts on behalf of Rockridge without regard to use of the funds for specific projects, pick the RCPC bucket.

If you plan no donations presently, remember the buckets and the projects in 2011. Donations are always welcomed, regardless of the time of year. — Editor

Of Special Note

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Design Review hearing set for Rockridge Center: **December 8**	3
RCPC and other local community groups forge a unified position on the Rockridge Shopping Center Proposal	3
RCPC Election, Vacancy ■ **RCPC Board issues first call** for applicants for the April board of directors election ■ **RCPC Board Vacancy** to be filled by appointment. Interested?	2

Public Review of Tunnel Mitigations

by Ronnie Spitzer, RCPC

City Council President Jane Brunner and the city's Public Works Agency hosted a public meeting to discuss and review the merits of a series of proposed transportation projects addressing issues related to Highway 24, and, in particular, the

Tunnel Mitigations, page 4



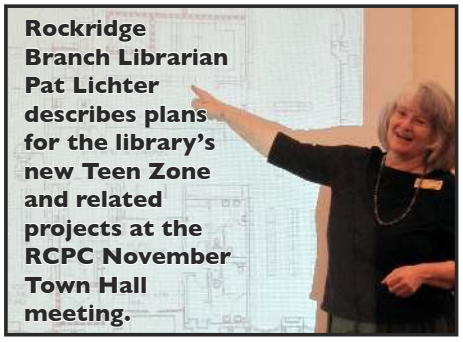
D. Kinkead

Anne Smulka, Fourth Bore Coalition chair.

NO December RCPC Town Hall Meeting.
See you in January, 2011!

■ **The November Town Hall**

Library Progress Report and Teen Zone Plans



Rockridge Branch Librarian Pat Lichter describes plans for the library's new Teen Zone and related projects at the RCPC November Town Hall meeting.

D. Kinkead

by Jon Gabel, RCPC boardmember

The Rockridge Branch Library was the focus of the November RCPC Town Hall meeting. Head Librarian Pat Lichter and

Library Plans, page 5

First Call for RCPC Board Applicants

The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) will hold its annual election for seats on the board of directors in April, 2011. Six board seats (out of a total of 13) will be up for election. One of them could be yours.

What do RCPC boardmembers do? Among current projects facing Rockridge are: two major Safeway building proposals; stimulating College Avenue retail; supporting Rockridge public schools; and confronting Rockridge's continuing problems with traffic and crime. RCPC is involved in all these issues and more.

Watch for further announcements in The Rockridge News. For more information or to tell of your interest in the meantime, e-mail chair@rockridge.org.

RCPC Plans Appointment for Board Vacancy

Prior to the regular board election in April, RCPC plans to fill a board vacancy by appointment. Board members must be Rockridge residents living in the area defined by the boundary map at http://rockridge.org/boundaries.html, 18 years of age or older, and are expected to sit on an RCPC committee. For more information, e-mail chair@rockridge.org.

In My Opinion

Got Plants? Watch Out!

by Robert Brokl

Oakland's Blight Ordinance was enacted during the administration of Mayor Elihu Harris. Most community activists supported it, hoping glaring and intractable blight could be corrected: vacant lots or front yards with dead cars and refrigerators, illegal dumping, empty and deteriorating buildings. But, as the cliché goes, be careful what you wish for. Your prized landscaping, important for screening, aesthetics, and habitat has also come to be defined as blight. Because of the extraordinary powers of the City to collect heavy fines and fees on seemingly open-ended blight investigations, the ordinance has been redefined.

But most Oakland residents no doubt assume the ordinance, enforced by the Community and Economic Development Agency's (CEDA) Building Services Department, is targeting major offenders. Most would be unaware that a repeat offense within an arbitrary two-year period results in a fine of over $1,300. And, standards are imposed so loosely that two different inspectors can have radically different takes on the same property.

When what Alfred Crofts and I believed to be an attractively landscaped yard on a rental property we have owned for 10 years motivated an angry neighbor to make a complaint, we learned what every Oakland home and apartment owner/renter with a garden should watch for.

Differing Right of Way Requirements

We were cited with "Overgrown vegetation, overgrowth obstructing public right of way." We learned that could mean different things at different times. One inspector wants 36 inches clearance on the sidewalk. CEDA employee Lee White, handling "engineer-

☛ **Blight or Benefit?, page 12**

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Friday: 12 – 5:30 p.m.
***CLOSED**: Sunday and Monday; also Dec 25-Jan 1.*
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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- Do you have questions about newsletter distribution?
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- Would you like to write a letter to the Editor?

Contact us at one of the following:
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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
☛ **January 8, 2011**
☛ **January deadline is December 23, 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.)*



Getting Close! College Avenue Safeway EIR Matching Grant Fundraising Drive Makes Gains

RCPC is getting closer to reaching its $10,000 goal for the matching grant from the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment. The grant (and matching donations) will fund professional consultants to review and critique the environmental impact report for the College Avenue Safeway Shopping Center Project. As of November 24, RCPC had received donations totaling $7,500. The RCPC board will next focus on talking to College Avenue merchants about supporting this community effort.

The draft environmental impact report (EIR) is likely to be released in December or January, so we're scrambling to reach our goal and bring in a full slate of consultants for the draft EIR's 45-day public review and comment period. You can contribute via PayPal or credit card at RCPC's Web site, http://rockridge.org, or, you can send your check made out to RCPC/Safeway EIR Fund and a completed copy of the coupon below via mail to: RCPC, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



Graphic: Stuart Flashman

YES! **I want to help RCPC protect Rockridge by making sure the EIR for the College Avenue Safeway Project is complete and accurate. Here is my contribution of $ _____.**

Name _____

Address _____ **City** _____ **ZIP** _____

Phone # _____ **e-mail** _____

Mail to: RCPC, 4123 Broadway PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Checks should be made payable to: RCPC/Safeway EIR Fund.

Thank you!

Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Federal tax ID no.: 94-3011284

RCPC Land Use Committee

The RCPC Land Use Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rockridge Branch Library, Upstairs Meeting Room, 7:30 p.m. Next meeting: December 22.
Subject to change. Check Rockridge.org for meeting updates

■ 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.

■ Rockridge Shopping Center Reconstruction Project (Broadway and Pleasant Valley)

The Planning Commission's design review committee will hold a public hearing December 8, 5 p.m., at City Hall, Hearing Room 1, to review this project, which will reconstruct and expand North Oakland's most important shopping center.

RCPC is working with four other local community groups to present an alternative community proposal.

■ In Rockridge; Friends and Neighbors of College Avenue (FANS)

■ In Temescal; Standing Together for Accountable Neighborhood Development (STAND) and Urbanists for a Livable Temescal Rockridge Area (ULTRA)

■ In the Piedmont Avenue Area, the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL).

Working together, the groups are designing a proposal to meet Safeway's project phasing requirements while providing a shopping area that is better integrated into North Oakland's urban fabric. When complete, the design will be posted on RCPC's website: http://rockridge.org.

Community support at the public hearing will be important in getting the Planning Commission to take the community alternative plan seriously. An environmental impact report (EIR) currently in preparation may be released this spring.

The Oakland planner assigned to the project is Darin Ranelletti, 238-3663, DRanelletti@oaklandnet.com.

■ Citywide Zoning Update

The Planning Commission continues its review of the proposed citywide zoning revisions with a public hearing on commercial area zoning changes scheduled December 15, 7 p.m., at City Hall, Hearing Room 1.

While the current rezoning proposal for the most part respects Rockridge's successful commercial zoning, RCPC continues to push for "fine tuning" to eliminate some problematic aspects.

RCPC is particularly concerned about the way conditional use permits for ground floor non-retail uses have nibbled away at College Avenue's retail base.

If you can attend the public hearing, your support for strengthening College Avenue's retail zoning would be most welcome and important for the commission to note.

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Tunnel Mitigations

from page 1

Caldecott Tunnel 4th Bore project now under construction. The proposed project list was developed by the city based mostly on a 2008 agreement between Oakland and Caltrans settling Oakland's objections to adding the fourth bore, and also on a series of walk audits of the area that took place last summer.

Speaking to a full room at Kaiser Elementary School at the November 8 meeting, planning consultant Victoria Eisen presented 33 draft mitigation projects. The projects are divided between North Hills areas nearest the tunnel, Rockridge, and Temescal. Of the 33 projects, 19 include areas within RCPC's boundaries.

Proposed Mitigations

The proposed mitigations, which must stay within a budget of $8 million, include bike lanes and sidewalks, traffic signals, and sound walls in the vicinity of Highway 24. Many of the proposed project designs illustrating the mitigations are conceptual at this point, with community input and more detailed designs needed for construction.

The Rockridge mitigation receiving the most audience interest was the Broadway/ Lawton intersection.

Residents described the hazardous crossing conditions at the intersection and expressed support for improvements. Over $400,000 was proposed for the intersection by the agreement, with the final configuration to be decided in future public meetings.

Soundwalls on Highway 24 were also mentioned by many members of the public at the meeting. The proposed soundwall-related project is not for actual construction but for studies needed to qualify each segment for state construction funding. Several speakers supported soundwalls as a way to enhance the quality of local life. The health impacts of noise at the measured levels along Rockridge streets, particularly on young children, was noted. Aesthetics was a concern of some speakers, as was the cost, and doubts about their effectiveness. Further analysis and review of the mitigation projects, including petitions and public meetings, should be expected.

The city accepted written comments through November 22. RCPC submitted a comment letter pointing out some potential issues, but generally supporting projects within the Rockridge area. Following the comment period, the city will review the public comments, then determine the next steps to prepare a final list for Council approval.

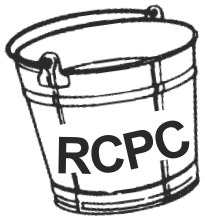
Funding for the highest ranked projects should be available immediately. See future Rockridge News issues for evolving details

Choose a Bucket; Choose a Future

■ RCPC: The Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) was incorporated in 1985 as a non-profit 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
- Provide leadership and representation of neighborhood interests.

RCPC is comprised of a 13-member board of directors representing the Rockridge community to the city of Oakland. Directors are elected by residents of Rockridge living within RCPC boundaries. RCPC supports its services with donations and with the proceeds of fundraising activities such as the biennial Rockridge Kitchen Tour.



Donations to RCPC may be made by check payable to RCPC and mailed to 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611, or online at RCPC's Web site: www.rockridge.org.

Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Federal tax ID no.: 94-3011284.

■ Rockridge BART Plaza: The Rockridge BART Plaza is a long-time plan coming closer to fruition. RCPC, RDA (Rockridge District Association) and BART have developed a plan to enhance the open, planted area at the corner of Keith and College, creating a more inviting, urban space. Funds for matching grants and project amenities are needed to advance the project. BART has already set aside most of the project funding. You can help bring this plaza to life. Contributions may be made via PayPal or credit card online at RCPC Web site, www.rockridge.org/rockridgeplaza.html.



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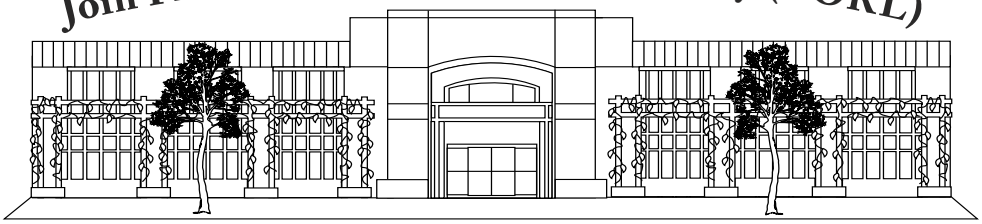


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Your tax-deductible donation to Friends of the Rockridge Library will help the library buy books for children, young teens and adults, including the popular Hot Picks books in 2011. FORL also funds an intern to assist with the children's summer reading programs; sponsors the Teen Advisory Board and other teen programs; and provides subscriptions to *The New York Times, New York Review of Books, The Economist* and many other periodicals read daily by Rockridge patrons.

The mission of FORL is to champion the Rockridge Library; to stimulate public enthusiasm for library programs, and interest in its needs, services and facilities; to serve as advocates for the library; to generate new ideas for the enhancement of library facilities and programs; to encourage gifts and volunteers for the library; and in general, to foster the continued development of the library so that it can respond to the needs of our diverse population.

Make a donation via the website (www.friendsofrockridgelibrary.org), or by mail, sending the coupon below to Post Office Box 3723, Oakland, CA 94609.

Friends of the Rockridge Library

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

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Library Plans

from page 1

Teen Specialist Librarian Susy Moorhead presented the latest plan for construction slated to start in April, 2011. The current computer area will become the "Teen Zone," which will be glassed off from the main reading room. Both quiet and noisy areas will be provided for the use of patrons aged 12-18, and both will be stocked with rugged, moveable furniture. The current DVD and CD area will become the new adult computer area, with DVDs and CDs moving to an expanded home in what is now the teen section.

Other library areas will remain as they are but with better lighting upstairs in the balcony, which will continue to function as the wi-fi area.

The Rockridge DVD Project

Following this presentation, Jon Gabel, co-chair of the Rockridge DVD Project, reported on fund-raising progress to fill the expanded DVD shelves.

For more about this project, and to learn how to make your donation, see page 7. You can also visit www.rockridgedvdproject.org for DVD titles and other information.

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.

A Porta Potty for Hardy Park is the Best Choice

Editor:

I am writing to make the case for the Porta Potty in Hardy Park. If there must be a restroom, a Porta Potty is the best choice for Hardy Park. Why? Most importantly, functionality:

- A Porta Potty cannot be stopped up and become unusable.
- A Porta Potty cannot be intentionally blocked to cause a messy nuisance.
- A Porta Potty does not need water service to be of service. It functions as the emergency stopping spot it is.
- If the Porta Potty were to be vandalized it can be repaired or replaced easily.

This is not the time to add to this part of Oakland's infrastructure creating a new maintenance project.

Oakland built a similar toilet at Bella Vista Park in 2005. I visited two times to see it in operation. On both occasions, it was locked and parents at the park told me it was always locked.

I thought the plan to build a permanent structure had been stopped, due to the cost of construction, but more importantly the cost to maintain. I was dismayed to read that construction was to begin by year's end.

Removing the Porta Potty and replacing it with a locked building serves no one. If we must prove this to ourselves, take the Porta Potty away for three months to simulate a locked restroom.

Please help stop this huge neighborhood mistake. E-mail forhardypark@aol.com or call 655-1767. Let's ask City Council President Jane Brunner to reconsider adding a problem to our park.

Read "A Little Relief" http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/10/08/BA9P1FPRHG.DTL for a report on a Porta Potty solution to restroom problems at a park in another part of the Bay Area.

— Margaret Pinter

FROG Park Committee Responds: Permanent Restroom is a Better Solution

Editor:

Rather than being a mistake, a regular restroom at Frog Park has been part of the long-term plan and community priorities for years. A Porta Potty is never as hygienic a solution as a regular restroom, and is not the best choice for a long-term facility like a park. Porta Potties can be damaged so they are not usable (this has happened at Frog Park), and they can be difficult for ADA users, the elderly and small children. Porta Potties are best suited to short-term uses, such as construction areas and special events.

Public Works planner Denise Louie, responsible for the Bella Vista restroom project, noted that it was built at the request of the community and is on Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) property. A special agreement limits its use to only during events and programs supervised by Oakland Parks & Recreation, OUSD or Friends of Bella Vista Park. It was never intended to be open day and night. The Friends of Bella Vista Park community leader recently confirmed to Ms. Louie that they are "happy to have the restroom" and the community supports the limited hours for the restroom because of the special circumstances involved.

The sfgate.com article the writer cites refers to Mission Dolores Park, an intensively-used park in San Francisco, which hosts large special events. Two restrooms were not sufficient for their large crowds. Frog Park cannot be used for such large events, so the comparison is not relevant.

Given that hundreds of people have signed petitions supporting a regular restroom at Frog Park, we believe this new facility responds to community wishes.

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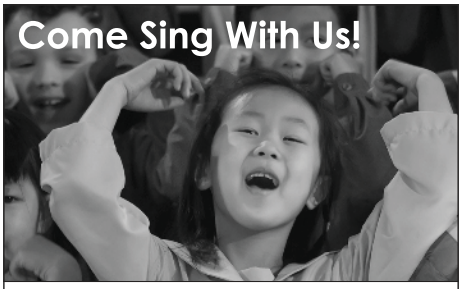
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Rockridge DVD Project Seeks to Fill Library DVD Shelves

by Annette Floystrup, DVD Project co-chair

The Rockridge DVD Project seeks to raise $33,000 to place more than 2,800 DVDs into the collections at the Rockridge Branch Library. A $1,000 challenge grant has been donated, which will be matched by the donor's employer. This gift, together with the $500 towards security cases from Friends of the Rockridge Library, launched the fundraising drive.

To see which documentaries, PBS series and specials, TV series, and classic and contemporary films for adults and young people your donations will add to the library collections, visit the Rockridge DVD Project Web page at www.rockridgedvdproject.org. You will be able to view the project database and see a synopsis, cast, cover art and many more details for each title.

Donations can be made via PayPal and by check. Checks should be made out to: "RCPC/Rockridge DVD Project" and sent to: RCPC/Rockridge DVD Project, 4123 Broadway PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Contributions will be gratefully and publicly acknowledged. Anonymous donations are welcome, as well.

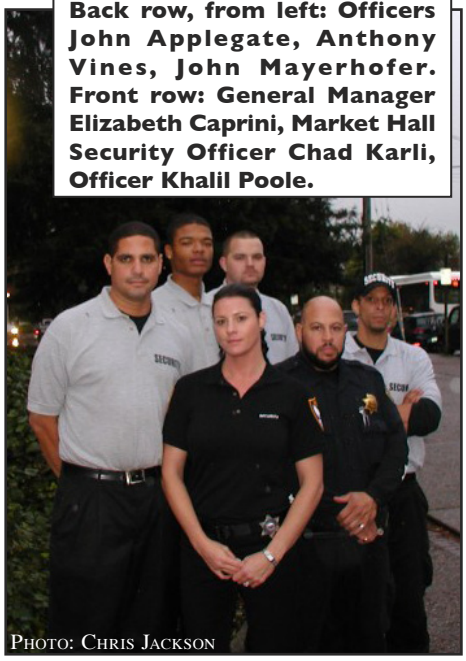
Donations to the Rockridge DVD Project are a tax-deductible charitable donation, and will be handled through RCPC, which is serving as fiscal sponsor for the project.

Article condensed and adapted from previous Rockridge News articles.

RDA Hires Holiday Security

by Chris Jackson, RDA operations manager

Once again, the Rockridge District Association (RDA), will be hiring V.M.A. Security to provide ambassador service to College Avenue during the holiday season. V.M.A., an Oakland-based security company, will provide security personnel to walk the avenue greeting customers, offering directions and generally doing all they can to make shopping, window shopping, and spending time on the avenue enjoyable.



VMA Security staff will soon be walking on College Avenue. Back row, from left: Officers John Applegate, Anthony Vines, John Mayerhofer. Front row: General Manager Elizabeth Caprini, Market Hall Security Officer Chad Karli, Officer Khalil Poole.

PHOTO: CHRIS JACKSON

In addition to the V.M.A. Security staff, Market Hall's security officer, Chad Karli, will be on the street, especially near the busy Market Hall /BART intersection, to help everyone feel more at ease and comfortable as they proceed with holiday preparations.

RDA Operations Manager, Chris Jackson, will help coordinate security services for the district.

Happy Holidays to all from the RDA.

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Rockridge Cornucopia

Barry A. Kaufman

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

I was speaking recently with a friend about a new cookbook I had purchased. He looked at me quizzically and told me he no longer gets recipes from cookbooks. He uses various Internet sites to get all his cooking ideas. No more cookbooks for him.

As a collector of over 300 cookbooks, I found his comment somewhat disturbing. For me, cookbooks are not simply about recipes. I consider contemporary cookbooks as gastronomic literature. With the publication of Julia Child's "Mastering the Art of French Cooking" and Irma Rombauer's "The Joy of Cooking," American home cooks began collecting cookbooks. Last year, more than 1,000 cookbooks were published and 40 million copies were sold.

For dedicated home cooks, a good cookbook is a gift that keeps on giving. With the onset of the holiday season, I would like to offer four new cookbooks as gift suggestions. Perhaps your gift recipient will reward you with a meal prepared from one of the great recipes in these wonderful cookbooks.

First on my list is "The Essential New York Times Cookbook: Classic Recipes for a New Century" by Amanda Hesser. The "father" of the contemporary cookbook is Craig Claiborne. Claiborne was the New York Times food editor from 1957-1972. As New Yorkers, we were weaned on the weekly Craig Claiborne column that appeared in the Sunday edition of the Times' magazine section.

Products of the post-World War II diet of canned and frozen vegetables, we were introduced by Claiborne to international cuisine. It was Claiborne who encouraged home cooks to broaden their culinary horizons and introduced Americans to the food processor and the joys of authentic Chinese cuisine. We've been making Claiborne's mushroom pie recipe every Thanksgiving for over 40 years.

Hesser's new book brings together the Times' classic recipes from 1850 to the present. In her introduction, Hesser makes sure the reader knows The Essential NY Times Cookbook is not an update of Claiborne's classic "New York Times Cookbook," but is a 150-year collection of recipes that appeared in the Times. It took Hesser over six years to test-cook each recipe and update older recipes with more contemporary measurements and serving sizes. The result is a cookbook for the ages.

"The Sunset Cookbook" is a celebration of the California/Western-states lifestyle. Artichokes, avocado, pesto, Mexican cuisine and, of course, gourmet grilling were introduced to a generation of post WW II "Sunset Magazine" readers. For generations, Sunset has been showing home cooks how to prepare the bounty of Western produce, beef, lamb, seafood, and poultry. "The Sunset Cookbook" is an homage to iconic Western dishes such as guacamole, cioppino, fish tacos, Dungeness crab, grilled tri-tip and barbequed oysters, to name but a few. It was not until I was in graduate school and met friends from California that I had my first taco with guacamole. The recipes and wonderful photographs in "The Sunset Cookbook" invite us to once again celebrate the joys of the California food lifestyle.

New from the Barefoot Contessa Ina Garten is "How Easy Is That?" My daughter and I are major Ina Garten groupies. "How Easy Is That?" is Garten's seventh cookbook in her series. This is not your typical three ingredients, three steps, 30-minute cookbook. The recipes are outstanding! The Barefoot Contessa offers preparations that are easy to make but have the unique flavor Garten is known for. The stunning photographs and easy-to-follow recipes invite the reader to have friends over for dinner. Check out the French Mussel Bisque or the easy Provençal lamb as luxurious additions to your entertaining repertoire. She even has a recipe for the classic New York egg cream. The recipe calls for Fox's U-Bet Chocolate Syrup. What a treat! As with all of Garten's books, "How Easy Is That?" will instantly become the go-to cookbook when inviting guests to brunch or dinner.

My last suggestion is a cross between a cooking magazine and cookbook. "Canal House Cooking" is published three times a year by Christopher Hirsheimer and Melissa Hamilton. Each edition of "Canal House Cooking" is a masterpiece of culinary art.

Hamilton and Hirsheimer cook in their small rustic country cottage in Lambertville, New Jersey. Hirshheimer was one of the founders of "Saveur" magazine. Her photographs in each issue of "Canal House Cooking" are simply elegant. Hamilton was an executive chef and food editor at "Saveur." Each issue comes to you with a personalized card of thanks for purchasing the book, which is only available online at www.canalhouse.com.

Check out this Canal House recipe:

Pickled Carrots

- Blanch thick round slices of peeled carrots in boiling water. Drain and place in a bowl.
- Cover carrots with rice wine vinegar. Add a few cloves, black peppercorns, and a bay leaf.
- Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 day and up to 2 weeks.

Barry Kaufman is a graduate of the California Culinary Academy. Barry is available for cooking classes and tours of Bay-area ethnic markets. His e-mail is kaufman42@earthlink.net

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FROG Park Corner





Rot found in the wood FROG Park play structures has been surveyed and repairs are starting. The structures are closed during the repair period.



Year-End Report: FROG Park Repairs, Restroom Construction

by the FROG Park Committee

Frog Park Renovations Continue

FROG Park committee members have collaborated with city staff and Leathers and Associates, the original play area designers, to determine how best to repair drainage problems and wood rot at Hardy Park, and to remove invasive redwood roots in Redondo Park's play area.

Redondo Park Repair Update

The matted redwood roots have been removed. Volunteer leader Gordon Piper and his Weekend Training Academy worked tirelessly on November 13 and 14 to clear most of the redwood roots and fibar out of the Redondo play area. More volunteers worked on a subsequent rainy Saturday to complete the root removal. The community volunteers worked alongside FROG's incredible Oakland Public Works gardeners Luciano Cortes, Mohan Singh, and Theresa Kennedy. We thank them all for their work.

Next, city staff will repair areas of the structures, the drainage system will be restored, a root barrier installed, and the city will put in new fibar. Redondo should be open by mid-January. In the meantime, the play area is closed. Children should not be allowed to play on the gravel in the area.

FROG seeks a Certified Arborist to design and implement a redwood root barrier. If you are interested or have recommendations, please contact info@frogpark.org.



City gardener Luciano Cortes, right, directs young volunteers at the Redondo Park clean-up as an adult neighborhood volunteer joins in.

Photo: Ronnie Spitzer

Hardy Park Update

New Southern Yellow Pine with a non-toxic preservative treatment and synthetic wood has been ordered, so city staff can begin repairs. Also, a replacement tot slide, purchased by FROG, will be installed.

Other changes include closing the small

Report: FROG Park, page 13

Support FROG Parks

Please consider supporting the FROG Committee's work, either through a monetary donation or volunteer labor. We have contributed roughly $10,000 towards repairs so far and anticipate further expenses. Funding will be needed for critical park items, such as a drainage system and redwood root barriers, including installation costs.

The Greenbelt Parks were built by volunteers, with community donations. Let's continue Rockridge's proud tradition, and support our park. You can make a tax-deductible donation using a check, credit card or PayPal. Visit: http://www.frogpark.org/donate for details. A donation coupon is also available on page 13.

Survey: FROG Park Users Express Facilities Preferences

New FROG Committee Member Carol Behr developed a survey to assess park users' preferences and feedback. Behr and other volunteers contacted park users near the Hardy play area. Others completed the survey online. Nearly 100 responses were received. Most responders were Rockridge residents. About 60 percent come to the park two to seven times or more a month, with about 20 percent coming eight or more times a month.

Findings

Surfacing: People preferred the fibar to options such as sand or

FROG User Survey, page 13

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Giving Thanks for Being a Little Cold

The sun is shining today, but I'm freezing in this drafty 1927 Rockridge home. Recently, we added eco-friendly insulation made of shredded jeans to the attic for added warmth, but, honestly, what good does that do when, in true Rockridge fashion, our home is not exactly plumb, the windows don't quite fit square and the doors are always open to admit dogs, cats, children and good neighbors. Considering the alternative, I think I'll be a little cold now and then. And, when my fingers are finally warm enough to hold a pen, I will be mindful of the benefits of living in an organic, open – if drafty – community like ours, and of all the good things people here do for each other day in and day out to make life so wonderfully livable in Rockridge.

My list of people to thank is, of course, totally inadequate and incomplete. Please fill in the blanks, whether in your hearts or on paper, with persons you would like to thank. If you like, send us their names and we will honor them in the January issue.

Thank You to Our Community Leaders

To **Susan Shawl** and **Nancy McKay** who have worked ceaselessly to keep Safeway from disrespecting the rights of Rockridge residents and merchants. To **Stuart Flashman** and so many other RCPC volunteers who give their time and talent on a daily basis to keep Rockridge a functioning community. To **Don Kinkead** and the entire **Rockridge News staff and contributors** for their devotion to getting the local news out every month to every Rockridge household since the mid-1980s. To **Jo and Ken Ellis** who open their home each month for the newsletter bundling team. To **Nancy Dutcher**, without whose tenaciousness we would not have a Rockridge Branch Library today. To Principal **Jonathan Mayer**, the PTA and the many people who made the expansion of Chabot Elementary School happen so efficiently. To the **Caldecott Tunnel Watchdogs**. To all those marvelous **FROG Park volunteers**, particularly **Theresa Nelson**, who has been involved with the FROG Park project from its inception in 1997 and is currently the chair, still raising funds and promoting the park. Other key community members whose names are practically synonymous with FROG Park are **Jennifer Cooper**, **Ronnie Spitzer**, **Howard Ferrier** and **Mike McDonald**. Thank you all!

THE ROCKRIDGE MUSE

by Ortrun Niesar

Thank You to Our Neighbors

I don't know all of your names, but you know who you are and we thank you every day. You look out for the well-being of the elderly in our community. You pick up our newspapers when we are out of town. You remind us to close our garage doors. You park your cars so others can park as well. You are mindful of living lawns, flowers and shrubs and curb your dogs. You return our dogs and cats and kids when they temporarily go AWOL. You call the fire department or the police when there is trouble. To **Ben Hamburg** and others who organize the CORE earthquake committees in their neighborhoods. To **John Wagers** who looks out for the legal rights and well-being of our trees. To **Carl Maes** who volunteered to place storm drain markers on our curbs. To people like **Kate Rivera** who organize tree plantings, and speed bump and sidewalk repairs on their blocks. To our neighborhood crime

With Thanks, page 11

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Parents: NOTE Oakland Unified School District's Options Enrollment Window for the 2011-12 School Year runs from Dec 6, 2010 to Jan 14, 2011. http://publicportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/ousd/site/default.asp



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With Thanks

from page 10

watch volunteers. To our neighbors who deliver The Rockridge News to every home. To all the wonderful folks who show up each year for Earth Day clean-up. To Rockridge keepers of the flame, like **Catherine Christensen** who was born here more than 80 years ago and never thought of leaving. To **Annalee Allen** who, as the city of Oakland historian, writes it all down for posterity. To the music teachers, the artists, the merchants, the lawyers and doctors and other professionals who volunteer their time and talent to keep our community viable. To the many volunteers, to all who think it is important to give back to the community in some way. You are the real heroes, the glue that holds our community together for all to enjoy.

A Big Thank You to All and Best Wishes for the Holidays!

Shop local if you can; buy an art work; do something nice for a neighbor; and try to catch at least one of those wonderful holiday concerts out there. Check out the offerings of the East Bay Children's Choir (www.piedmontchoirs.org). Christmas Revels will be doing an Irish Immigrant Christmas this year at the Scottish Rite Temple (510/452-8800). Lastly, Theresa Nelson and the Bungalow Ensemble have a new CD out, entitled "Lullay My Sweet One." It's not in the stores yet, but go to CDbaby.com (http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/bungalowens) or iTunes to listen and purchase. Visit the ensemble's Web site: http://www.lullaymysweetone.com/

Ortrun Niesar can be reached at onieser@sbcglobal.net or 510/326-2161.



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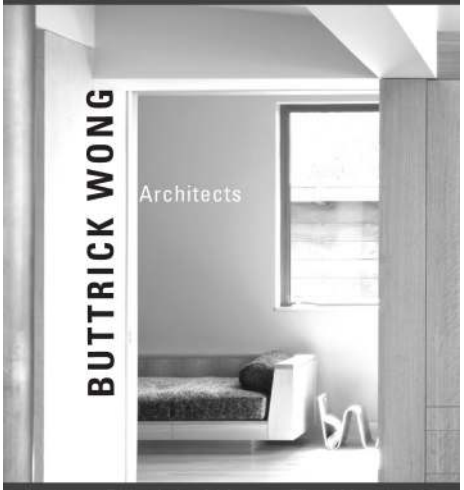
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10/29/10	4	2	5898 Romany Rd.	$1,150,000	$1,150,000	8	$1,160,000
10/29/10	4	3	6021 Acacia Ave.	$1,549,000	$1,549,000	4	$1,549,000
10/29/10	5	5	73 Beechwood Dr.	$2,295,000	$2,195,000	82	$1,905,000
11/02/10	3	2	5453 Kales Ave.	$539,000	$499,000	30	$500,000
11/02/10	3	2	5591 Lawton Ave.	$859,000	$859,000	24	$844,000
11/05/10	4	2	5816 Chabot Rd.	$989,000	$989,000	9	$989,000
11/9/10	3	1	5524 Lawton Ave.	$799,000	$799,000	11	$839,000
11/17/10	3	2	5427 Carlton St.	$849,000	$849,000	9	$973,000

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Thank You, RDA


Photo: Yeda Altes

October's Halloween parade and entertainment event was another Rockridge success as the Rockridge District Association (RDA) and the Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) coordinated planning and presentation of the event.

In the spirit of the season for RDA, left to right above, were Susan Bernosky of Strathan Insurance Services, Inc.,Andrea Griffith-Utne, formerly of Bernosky's office, and Chris Jackson, RDA operations manager. (Find more parade pictures at www.rockridge.org.)

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Blight or Benefit?

from page 2

ing design and right of way management," told us he prefers 48 inches but said ADA requirements, Title 24, California and Oakland building codes had varying and overlapping requirements.

A second inspector and his supervisor are applying the most rigorous interpretation ("property to face of curb") of Oakland Municipal Code 12.04.070: "*Grass and other obstructions: Every owner of real property in the city shall keep the entire sidewalk in front of such property, from curb to lot line, free and clear of all grass, weeds, rubbish, or other obstructions or materials which from any cause whatever shall have accumulated or may accumulate upon such sidewalk above the established grade of the same.*" Grass or leaves maybe, but does this include landscaping?

One person's blight is another's ambiance. The space between table and chairs and curb plantings at the Nomad Cafe on Shattuck are, on average, 21 inches. The fortnight lilies planted curbside at the Jane Brunner-sponsored new entrance to Bushrod Park overhang the sidewalk and constrict it to about 30 inches. All blight?

A Complaint-Driven Process

Calls to some Council offices revealed unhappiness with the ordinance. Neighbors and community activists see a pattern of grudge complaints and inspectors conducting fishing expeditions and costly re-inspections. A realtor we know routinely called in blight complaints about properties near houses he was about to list.

Green Concrete or Green?

The message from CEDA affirms the safer course of concrete and cyclone fences to the detriment of landscaping, or, as the blight ordinance brochure puts it: "Keep your yards neat and tidy..." But landscaping is often calculated as 10 percent of a home's value. Some neighborhoods, like Rockridge, are defined by lush plantings and trees, the "community standard," maintained and underwritten by the property owner but benefitting all. Habitat supports vulnerable bees and birds, trees soak up carbon dioxide. Deciduous trees shade in summer and let sunlight through in winter, saving energy.

Councilmembers have embraced street trees and greening Oakland, but the rhetoric hasn't kept pace with the City's insatiable need for fees and fines; a permanent, mostly faceless bureaucracy that makes and enforces its own rules.

Now: Stop reading and rush outside to rake. Oakland handles 22,000 blight complaints a year. Your number may come up next.

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Local News 94618

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Report: FROG Park

from page 9

tire swing under the play structure because it is unsafe for small children. The lower tire swing will remain. The train will be mostly rebuilt. Leathers and Associates said much of the wood rot was due to sand mixing into the fibar. Later, a new entrance added to the sand area will open directly onto the walkway instead of into the train area, reducing the chance of sand mixing with fibar. Lastly, the suspension bridge will be rebuilt off-site this spring. To help with this project (some carpentry skills would be helpful), please contact Howard Ferrier, hwferrier@sbcglobal.net.

Local Merchant Support

We are grateful to Economy Lumber Piedmont (formerly Piedmont Lumber) for procuring, at a substantial discount, the special synthetic wood for the repairs. They've provided materials at cost to FROG since 2001. College Avenue's Strahan Insurance Services contributed $500 toward the cost of the tot slide. We are grateful for both merchants' continued support.

Restroom Update

Park users have worked more than four years to get a functional restroom at the Hardy end of Frog Park. FROG committee member Mike McDonald and others gathered hundreds of signatures in support of a restroom, and worked with Councilmember Jane Brunner and her staff to secure funding. A recent survey of almost 100 park users showed that a regular restroom was the number one priority.

The new restroom will be located about where the Porta Potty now sits, utilizing existing sewer and water lines. FROG funded the Porta Potty for the past nine years – at a cost of about $2,000 a year – as a part of the long-term construction plan. Restroom construction should begin later in December. The single, unisex restroom will be about 6 feet by 8 feet in size, with a sink, flush toilet, and solar panels for lighting. It will be locked at night. City staff expect construction will take about three months.



Nestled under Hwy 24 next to the dog run, the FROG Park Porta Potty will soon be replaced – in the same location – by a permanent restroom providing typical modern facilities and changing tables.

Photo: D. Kinkead

FROG User Survey

from page 9

shredded rubber throughout the play area. They preferred coarse sand for the sand play area, rather than fine sand.

Desired Improvements

The number one suggestion was for a new restroom. The next most popular suggestions called for:

- more picnic tables in the grassy area
- baby swings
- more swings overall
- new sand
- improved maintenance.

FROG Park Donation Coupon

Yes! I want to help FROG fund needed repairs at Frog Park!
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Please send your check to: FROG c/o RCPC, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. You may also contribute online with your credit card at www.frogpark.org
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Holiday Concert at St. Augustine Catholic Church

(400 Alcatraz Ave.), Friday, December 17, 8:00 p.m. The evening features carols by Bay Area singers Elizabeth Durand, April McNealy, Daniel Leal, and Todd Minson. Adults-$15, Children/seniors-$10.

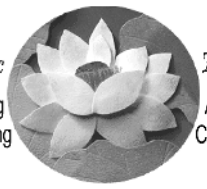
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E-mail *Rockridge News* Community Calendar items to: joellis1@hotmail.com, phone 653-3210 (after noon), or mail to: *Rockridge News* Community Calendar, 4123 Broadway, PMB 311, Oakland, CA 94611. Deadline is the next to the last Tuesday of the month.

Holiday Cheer and a Happy New Year!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Residents and business members of NCPC's 12Y and 13X areas can voice their concerns about crime and public safety, 2nd Thursday each month (12/9), 7pm. **POTLUCK: bring food to share**. 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 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:

- **Special Winter Pajama Story Time:** Come in your warmest pj's for stories & a winter craft. Tuesday, 12/14, 7:00 pm. All ages welcome.
- **Berkeley Rep School of Theatre** presents **A Story Builders Workshop** on Lemony Snicket's *The Composer Is Dead* for 7- to 10-year-olds. Solve the mystery by becoming a character in this living theater. Wednesday, 12/15, 3:00-4:00pm. Sign up at the Children's Reference Desk.

FOR TEENS

- **Rockridge Ninjas Anime Club: Ages 13 and up**, watch and talk about anime (Japanese animation). Second Tues. each month (12/14, 1/11), 5 to 6:30pm, upstairs meeting room.
- **Teen Advisory Board** (ages 14-18)**:** Help advise the library how to better serve teens. Get community service credit for school. **Snacks provided.** 1st Saturday each month from 4 to 5pm. **NOTE: Jan. meeting re-scheduled to 1/15 because of New Year's Day.**

For questions: Susy, 597- 5017.

FOR ADULTS

- **Oakland PEN 20th Annual Literary Awards.** PEN Oakland presents the Josephine Miles Literary Award to outstanding book titles published in the previous year. Will include brief readings by the winning authors, followed by a reception and book signings. Sat. 12/11, 2pm-5pm. Free and open to the public. More info: Tennessee Reed, 206-6107.
- **Writers Support/Critique Group:** All writers welcome. Bring 15 copies of up to 5 pgs. (double-spaced, MS margins) of any prose for on-site reading/discussion (you're also welcome to come empty-handed). Third Saturday each month (12/18), 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, 5 to 7pm (**note new times**). Advance sign-up starts 4:45pm.

ART EXHIBITS (CALL TO CONFIRM)

GALLERY:

- Dec: **Julie Bracker:** oil paintings.
- Jan: **Nancy Duscenteau:** documentary photographs.

LOBBY DISPLAY CASE:

- Dec: **Anya Eehn:** sculpture.
- Jan: TBA

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 **all Oakland Public Libraries closed Dec 25 through Jan 1.**
Re-opens Tues., Jan 4, 2011.

Peralta Kindergarten Open House

Meet Principal **Rosette Costello** and kindergarten teachers. All prospective families with kindergartners or transfer students invited to attend. This is a parent only event with very limited childcare available, so please leave children at home if possible. Thurs., Dec 9, 6:30 to 8pm. Peralta Elementary multi-purpose room; 460 63rd Street. Parking available on the school yard (enter on Alcatraz). More info about enrollment and scheduling school tours (on 12/9, 12/14, 1/6 and 1/11): 879-1450 or www.peraltaschool.org.

Amnesty International Celebration of Human Rights Day

Join the **Write for Rights Global Write-a-thon, the world's largest letter writing event:** write letters on behalf of individuals at risk from human rights abuses and send letters and cards of hope to prisoners of conscience around the world. Bring writing materials and stamps. Sunday, Dec. 12, 10am to 4pm. DIESEL, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave. More info: Warren, 655-5749 or www.amnestyusa.org/writeathon/cases.php

St. Albert Priory Christmas Concert

The Schola Cantorum of St. Albert Priory presents its annual Christmas concert entitled "In Dulci Jubilo." Joined by the **Women's Antique Vocal Ensemble (WAVE)**, and the Renaissance wind band **Alta Sonora**, they will perform works by Leonel Power, Praetorius, Buxtehude, Orlande de Lassus, Marc-Antoine Charpentier, and others. Plainchant and music from Codex Speciálnik and Piae Cantiones will also be performed, in addition to a **sing-along of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus"**. Saturday, Dec. 18, 8:00pm. St. Albert Priory Chapel, 6172 Chabot Road. $20 General/$10 Students/Seniors. No advanced ticket sales. Info: 510/596-1800.

Calif. College of the Arts (CCA) Interface Exhibition

"Art Using Technology Using Art": interactive, kinetic, robotic, generative and computer-based artworks. Dec., 17, 7pm to10pm. CCA campus, 5212 Broadway, Oliver Art Center. Info 594-3656 or www.cca.edu/.

Studio One Art Center Annual Winter Pottery and Crafts Sale

Sunday, Dec 12, noon to 4pm. To sell your work or crafts at this event, purchase a table at 597-5027 or www.studiooneartcenter.net.

North Oakland Senior Center

Programs include: Arts and crafts; health Insurance counseling; dancing and exercise; trips, tours and theater outings; Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Groups and more. Mon.-Fri., 8:30am to 4pm. (**call for Dec. hrs**). 5714 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Subscribe to "The North Oakland Senior Times" for full schedule of classes/events, lunch menus, membership, and volunteer opportunities. Info: 597- 5085.

American Red Cross

Mobile Blood Drives: In Dec., there will be 4 weekly drawings and 4 winners for **$100 Macy's gift cards** (not available at high school or college blood drives). Call 1-800/Red Cross (1-800/733-2767) or visit www.redcrossblood.org to find a location near you.

OUSD Enrollment for 2011

Oakland Unified School District's Options Enrollment Window for the 2011-12 school year runs from Dec 6, 2010 to Jan 14, 2011. For more information, visit: http://publicportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/ousd/site/default.asp

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